THE SANFORD FOLLIES

DOUBLE ISSUE

THE Nation.

IRAN'S GREEN WAVE

WHERE IS IT HEADED?

ROBERT DREYFUSS

JULY 20/27, 2009
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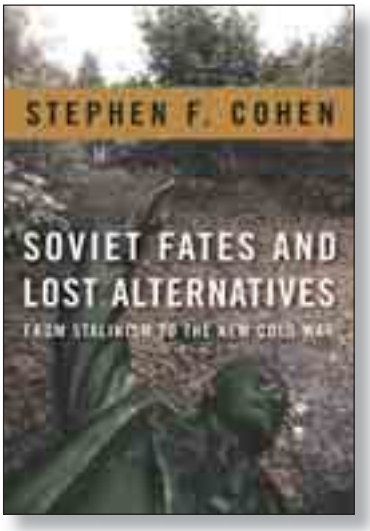

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Letters

I.F. Stone, Secret Agent? Spy? Mole?

Silver Spring, Md.

In an October 3, 2006, piece on *The American Prospect*'s website, Eric Alterman denounced as "almost entirely bogus" the controversy over "whether [I. F.] Stone ever willingly…cooperated with the KGB in any way. He did not."

In May 2009, Alexander Vassiliev's notes from KGB archives became public. They show that from 1936 until the end of 1938, Stone secretly carried out specific tasks for the KGB. That is the definition of an intelligence agent, although Stone appears not to have been a particularly important one.

Vassiliev's notes also corroborate that Stone was code-named "BLIN" and thus was the journalist whom the KGB attempted to re-recruit in late 1944, as first revealed by Venona intercepts released in 1996. Moreover, former KGB Maj. Gen. Oleg Kalugin, whose 1992 allegations instigated the controversy, stated three years ago that Stone began cooperating with Soviet intelligence in 1936. Kalugin has rightly been criticized for changing his story, but that statement has to count for something, unless one thinks it was a lucky guess.

Rather than retract his ill-advised assertion when faced with new evidence, Alterman has aggressively attacked—obfuscating the facts, denouncing the messengers and lumping together everybody who doesn't march in lockstep with his inner convictions ["The Liberal Media," June 22].

Because of the new evidence, I agreed to sift through all the allegations and counterclaims in an essay for the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, which appears in the Summer 2009 edition (mitpressjournals.org/toc/jcws/11/3). Readers can judge for themselves whether I treated Stone fairly and put his activities in context.

Alterman's behavior is disappointing for a CUNY journalism professor who never fails to present himself as a disciple of I.F. Stone, one of the premier investigative journalists of his generation.

Max Holland

letters@thenation.com

Alterman Replies

New York City

Neither space nor sanity allows me to regurgitate, yet again, all the holes in the arguments for I.F. Stone's alleged espionage career made by the likes of Max Holland, or those of Ann Coulter and Messrs. Haynes, Klehr, Radosh, Horowitz, Novak, etc. They reveal far more about Stone's accusers than about the man himself. Holland knows that the notes of Vassiliev—ex-KGB man desperate to sell his wares in the West—have never been verified and are hardly the kind of source upon which any careful historian would build a case for espionage. He also knows that the myriad self-contradictory musings of Kalugin—another ex-KGB man desperate to sell his wares in the West—have not only been successfully challenged but have changed over time, depending on who was buying. (Kalugin denied them to me personally.) He knows, further, that by the standards of Haynes, Klehr and Vassiliev, Walter Lippmann was a "Soviet spy," as were countless other Western journalists of the period.

But more troubling than what Holland knows and does not admit is what he "knows" that ain't so. I referred to Holland in my column exclusively because of his baseless speculation that the KGB funded publication of *I.F. Stone's Weekly* and Stone's *Hidden History of the Cold War*. He has produced no evidence for this slanderous flight of fancy and offers none here. Finally (and least consequentially), his crack about my self-presentation is also false. I have never presented myself as a "disciple" of Stone or even as an "investigative journalist." I was Izzy's friend, period.

Eric Alterman

'A Touching Faith' in Spookdom

New York City

It is not my custom to respond to reviews of my books (you can't win, after all), but I am making an exception for D.D. Guttenplan's comments on *Alger Hiss and the*

(continued on page 24)

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Public Option Now!

In a polity as unwieldy and heterogeneous as ours, attaining 70 percent public approval for any policy is a minor miracle. Doubly so when it's a fairly esoteric provision of healthcare reform and, crucially, when it involves vital progressive policy. Yet in the past few weeks, three successive national polls have shown that roughly 70 percent of respondents favor a Medicare-style public plan as part of healthcare reform.

EDITORIAL

It makes sense. Almost every American knows someone who uses Medicare, and the satisfaction with that program is famously high. From a policy perspective, a public option would serve an essential purpose: if it performed with the efficiency and cost control of Medicare, it would impose discipline on private insurers through competition. In other words, it would set a kind of baseline of care by giving people a choice.

Most Democrats in the House and Senate seem to be on board, as is President Obama, who not only campaigned on a public option but took quite a bit of time to make the case for it during a recent White House midday press conference and later ABC prime-time town hall meeting. "If private insurers say that the marketplace provides the best quality healthcare, if they tell us that they're offering a good deal," he said during the press conference, "then why is it that the government—which they say can't run anything—suddenly is going to drive them out of business? That's not logical."

Those who oppose the public option are the very powerful defenders of the status quo. First, there's the Republican Party, which, as in 1993, is dead set on killing (or, failing that, maiming) any comprehensive healthcare reform. Partly this is because of ideology; mostly it's a matter of politics: allowing Democrats to deliver much-desired reform would be conceding a major, perhaps epoch-shaping defeat. Then there is the health-industrial complex, from the American Medical Association to the insurance companies, which are quite profitable, thank you very much, and have no interest in being forced to compete with a plan that would undoubtedly have lower administrative costs. Indeed, despite their avowed reverence for competition—which they claim a public plan would undermine—insurers in large parts of the country enjoy a near-monopoly. Health Care for America Now recently issued a report showing that 94 percent of local insurance markets are "highly concentrated," according to the guidelines used by the Justice Department.

Though this is a winnable fight, the outcome is up for grabs. Key Senate Democrats are wavering in the face of pressure from the healthcare industry: Kent Conrad of North Dakota is skeptical of a public option; North Carolina's Kay Hagan has come out against it; Ben Nelson of Nebraska has gone back and forth too many times to count—although, hearteningly, he has proven vulnerable to pressure from progressives. Arlen Specter has come out in favor of a public option, and there are at least a few Republicans who seem open to it.

A public option is needed but is by no means sufficient, and progressives will have to be vigilant about other key parts of the reform package, such as the income level at which healthcare is subsidized. But politically the public plan is a useful and worthy rallying cry. The president, while forcefully advocating for the public option from the bully pulpit, has also said there are no "lines in the sand." It is the job of citizens, then, to draw them.

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News & Analysis

Greg Grandin: Coup in Honduras

Tom Hayden: Alex Sanchez's arrest

Ezra Nawi: Israel's man of conscience

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Slide Show: America's presidents

Nation Poll: Will Senator Franken make a difference?

Shades of Green

COMMENT

America's environmentalists were torn about whether to support the Waxman-Markey climate bill, which passed the House on June 26, and for good reason. On the one hand, passage of the American Clean Energy and Security Act was a historic achievement. After twenty years of denial, deception and delay, Washington had at last ordered reductions in the greenhouse gas emissions that drive global warming. On the other hand, the bill's specifics fell far short of what science says is necessary to (perhaps) prevent catastrophic climate change.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has said that global emissions must fall by 25 to 40 percent from 1990 levels by 2020. The cap-and-trade provisions of Waxman-Markey will cut US emissions by only 1 percent by 2020, a shortcoming backers disguise with creative accounting. They claim the bill will cut emissions by 17 percent—which it might, if one measures against the higher baseline of 2005—and includes credits for halting deforestation overseas, though of course the earth's atmosphere would not be tricked by such maneuvers. Adding insult to injury, most of the bill's pollution permits will be given away rather than sold, thus subsidizing today's polluters and delaying the transition to low-carbon energy sources. Finally, the bill cancels the president's current authority under the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse emissions, a clear step backward.

Supporters argued that such dilutions were necessary to gain enough votes to pass the bill (the vote was still close—219 to 212) and that Congressional backing of emissions cuts is essential to establish US credibility at the crucial global climate negotiations in Copenhagen in December. Doubtless these same arguments will be repeated when Waxman-Markey goes to the Senate, where the legislation is likely to be weakened further, if it passes at all.

But why assume that US credibility in Copenhagen rests on Congress passing a climate bill, no matter how weak? The United States has other ways to send the world a message—and Barack Obama began exploring them even before he became president.

In July 2008, shortly after securing his party's presidential nomination, Obama sent representatives to Beijing for two days of high-level, off-the-record talks on climate change, held in a luxury hotel overlooking the Great Wall. Leading the Chinese side was Xie Zhenhua, China's top climate negotiator. The US delegation included Republicans (though John McCain's campaign declined to participate) and Democrats, notably John Holdren, now President Obama's science adviser. The talks went so well that a second back-channel meeting was held in October, where unofficial agreement was reached on three points. Chief among them: China and the United States would "work together for a successful outcome" to the climate negotiations in Copenhagen, according to William Chandler of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who helped organize the discussions.

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Noted.

***THE NATION* AND THE NAACP:** Progressive politics and the quest for civil rights were in **Oswald Garrison Villard**'s blood. His grandfather was the great abolitionist **William Lloyd Garrison**. His mother was a leader in the women's suffrage movement, his father the owner of the literary supplement to the *New York Evening Post*, aka *The Nation*. So it was no surprise that when the modern civil rights movement emerged from the ashes of the 1908 Springfield race riots, Villard was one of its driving forces.

It began in January 1909 when **Mary White Ovington**, **Henry Moskowitz** and **William English Walling** met in New York to organize a group they hoped would aggressively address the country's racial issues. The trio invited Villard, then president of the New York Evening Post Company (nepotism occasionally has its benefits), to join them. Villard helped organize the subsequent convention out of which the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People** (NAACP) was born. When the fledgling organization began to founder, it was Villard who kept it together; and when the decision was made to pursue justice in the courts, it was Villard who took the lead in forming the NAACP's legal arm, which would prove so instrumental to the movement's success, culminating in its historic legal victory in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The Nation has a proud history, but its connection through Villard, who became its editor and owner upon his father's death in 1918, to the most righteous of all Supreme Court decisions may be among its greatest legacies. Look for a special section celebrating Villard and the NAACP on our website this month.

DEMOCRACY DERAILED: When Honduran President **Manuel Zelaya**—who was rousted out of his bed on June 28 by armed soldiers and forced into exile—took office in early 2006, unionists, peasant activists and reformers expected little of the center-right politician. So did the elite Honduran families who control the country's media, banking, agricultural, manufacturing and narcotics industries. "You are only temporary, while we are permanent," they told him soon after his inauguration.

But the reality of governing a country where more than 60 percent live in poverty tends to reinforce a left slant. Over the past two years Zelaya has adopted a progressive agenda, including steering his country into the **Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas** and **Petrocaribe**, two regional economic alliances backed by Venezuela to wean Latin America from its dependence on the United States.

For the elite, however, Zelaya took a step too far when he began to push for the convocation of a constitutional assembly in order to democratize Honduras's notoriously exclusionary political system. The US media have falsely presented this as a power grab, an effort to end term limits to allow Zelaya to run for re-election. But the referendum simply asks Hondurans to vote on whether or not to have a vote on revising the Constitution, with the terms of that revision left to an elected assembly.

Latin America has demonstrated a remarkable degree of unanimity in condemning the coup and demanding Zelaya's return to power. The **Organization of American States** gave Honduras a July 3 deadline to restore Zelaya or face expulsion from the organization. **Barack Obama** also issued strong words against Zelaya's overthrow, but the State Department has been more circumspect. It is reluctant to use the word "coup," which would trigger automatic sanctions. Likewise, according to **John Negroponte**, Secretary of State **Hillary Clinton** is working to "preserve some leverage to try and get Zelaya to back down from his insistence on a referendum."

As of this writing, the new regime has cracked down on the media and instituted a curfew, with reports of escalating repression by security forces against Zelaya supporters. According to the **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights**, thirty people have either gone missing or have been detained. With Honduras on the brink, Washington should resist any temptation to attach conditions on Zelaya's return and fully support international efforts to resolve the crisis. "This is a golden opportunity," Costa Rica's former Vice President **Kevin Casas-Zamora** said, for Obama "to make a clear break with the past and show that he is unequivocally siding with democracy, even if [some in Washington] don't necessarily like the guy." GREG GRANDIN

SOTOMAYOR AND *RICCI*: If there are any lingering doubts about how neatly Judge **Sonia Sotomayor** fits within the mainstream of the American judiciary, those concerns can be put to rest by the Supreme Court's ruling in the case conservatives had hoped would "disqualify" her. The 5-4 decision in **Ricci v. DeStefano**—which arose after the city of New Haven, Connecticut, tossed out a fire department promotional exam that appeared to favor white test-takers—confirmed what everyone knew: there are deep divisions with regard to affirmative action. But nothing in the Court's ruling pointed to Sotomayor as an outlier.

Sotomayor sat on an appeals court panel that said the city acted appropriately; the High Court majority disagreed. The important thing to remember is that Sotomayor wasn't the "judicial activist." She stood with a lower court on the side of what veteran court-watchers such as **Linda Greenhouse** identify as "settled precedent" on employment law. "Judge Sotomayor and her colleagues played by the old rules, and the Court changed them," says Greenhouse. There are points at which the Supreme Court can and must establish new precedents, but when this happens—as in the great civil rights cases of the 1950s and '60s—great care is usually taken to establish solid majorities and sound arguments. Instead of doing that, the Court's current majority pushed the limits of the law so recklessly that Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsburg** wrote in her pointed dissent, "The Court's order and opinion, I anticipate, will not have staying power."

Let's hope Ginsburg is right. But no matter where the High Court goes next, it will likely do so with Sotomayor. As one of the nation's leading conservative commentators on legal matters, Case Western Reserve University law school professor **Jonathan Adler** admitted after the ruling came down, "The case does not suggest that she is a radical or outside of the legal mainstream." Adler concluded, "I find it (almost) inconceivable that she will not be confirmed. A 5-4 reversal, even on a contentious, high-profile issue, will not change that." JOHN NICHOLS

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If that pledge becomes policy, it could rank as the most important breakthrough in the history of climate change diplomacy. Together, the United States and China produce 40 percent of annual global greenhouse gas emissions. That gives them veto power over the rest of the world's progress; no matter how much the European Union, which has pledged 20 percent reductions by 2020, and other governments might do, they cannot reverse global warming if the two carbon superpowers don't do their part. Conversely, if China and the United States were to announce credible, ambitious plans to limit emissions, it would build momentum for reaching a strong agreement among all nations in Copenhagen, a meeting widely seen as humanity's last chance to avoid catastrophic climate change.

The turning point in the back-channel discussions came on their very first day, said Chandler. For more than ten years, Washington had refused to cut emissions unless China did too. But Beijing resisted, pointing out that it was US and other rich countries' emissions during the past 200 years of industrialization that had caused global warming, and besides, China's per capita emissions were one-fifth of America's. The familiar impasse surfaced at the Great Wall gathering when one American asked what the Chinese were prepared to do if the next president promised to cut US emissions. "Xie started answering," recalled Chandler, "and it was like he pushed the button on a tape recorder. Out came the same boilerplate we'd heard so many times before: the US bore historical responsibility for the problem, China was still a developing nation and had the right to use more energy and so forth. But after forty-five seconds, Xie stopped talking. It was as if he turned off the tape. And then he said, 'But we have to move beyond all that now.' That's when we knew things had changed and a real breakthrough was possible."

No doubt China anticipated a shift in US policy with Bush's exit, but having recently returned from two weeks of reporting in China, I suspect another reason for the new flexibility: the Chinese leaders have at last recognized how hard climate change will hit their country. One government study has warned that higher temperatures and volatile rainfall could cause production of rice, wheat and corn—the staples of the Chinese diet—to fall 37 percent by 2040 unless effective adaptation measures are taken. Such a decline would gravely endanger China's ability to feed itself and thus the Communist Party's hold on power.

Obstacles to a formal US-China climate agreement remain. Publicly China is demanding that we cut US emissions by 40 percent by 2020 and provide tens of billions of dollars to developing nations to help them adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Obama administration rebuffs these demands as "not serious" while continuing to insist that China accept reduction targets too. Beijing still rejects this.

But the back-channel talks suggest a way around the impasse. Recall that there was agreement during the talks. In addition to a successful outcome in Copenhagen, the US and Chinese delegations agreed, according to Chandler, "to rapidly deploy existing technologies to boost energy efficiency"—the quickest path to large emissions cuts. A leading Chinese think tank has concluded that better efficiency could reduce China's emissions by one-third by 2050; the United States could cut its energy use 30 percent if all states emulated California's efficiency. Such reductions could buy time for a second back-channel agreement to bear fruit: a joint US-China program to develop low-carbon technologies for vehicles and coal plants, which would enable China to continue burning coal, the source of three-quarters of its energy consumption.

President Obama could sign such an agreement regardless of what Congress does (besides, there is considerable support on Capitol Hill for energy efficiency and green-tech R&D), and in the short to medium term the results could match the IPCC's recommendations. To be sure, binding emissions targets are important. But if Washington and Beijing can't agree on them yet, at least the two carbon superpowers could launch a green efficiency revolution that can achieve many of the same ends. In that case, Copenhagen might have "a successful outcome" after all.

MARK HERTSGAARD

Mark Hertsgaard (markhertsgaard.com) is a fellow of The Nation Institute and The Nation's environment correspondent. His next book, Living Through the Storm: How We Survive the Next 50 Years of Climate Change, *is forthcoming from Houghton Mifflin.*

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

Ensign, Sanford and Multi-tasking

Conservatives seem somehow ill equipped
To govern and still keep their trousers zipped.

Triangles

It's hard loving a married man. One who is far away, with a life structured by family and history and expectation, who dreams of freedom but needs the chains.

It's hard being that needed chain, the wife, icon of the known world, blameless victim whose sympathizers nevertheless cannot help daubing with the colors of failure. *Poor thing…*

It's not supposed to be hard being the married man with the lover and the wife and the life. *That's the life!*—until he gets caught. Then the slurs come swiftly, predictably: narcissist, cheater, hypocrite, pig.

In the latest political sex scandal, which isn't a scandal at all but a circumstance as old and common as time, South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford, Jenny Sanford and María Belén Chapur have provided an edifying example of pain as a condition of life, love as both a drowning pool and sustaining spring, adultery as the monogamy system's disowned twin. And all that

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liberals can talk about is what a fraud he is. No sooner had Sanford made his forced confession than the knees of the righteous, in this case Rachel Maddow, Maureen Dowd and legions of Democratic water-carriers-cum-bloggers, snapped in unison. "Hypocrite!" they didn't quite thunder. Christians thunder; liberals sneer, but it amounts to the same thing, counting sins.

They got quite a lot wrong. In South Carolina politics, Sanford has never been known as a "Bible thumper," and he recently irritated those who are by not signing a bill that would have welded I Believe to the state license plate. He wasn't elected governor in 2002 pushing family values; he ran as a vague libertarian and was elected because a lot of Democrats, blacks especially, abandoned the odious incumbent, Jim Hodges, who got into office powered by black votes and then engineered an immense transfer of wealth from the poor and black to the better-off and white via his education lottery. Sanford didn't "lead the charge" against Bill Clinton in the Monica Lewinsky affair; he said Clinton had lied (he had) and, like a dutiful low-level Representative in a party of discipline, voted for impeachment (along with five Democrats). He is no more of a right-wing, hate-filled moralist than most anyone in the party of Barack and Bill, the party of "don't ask, don't tell"; the Defense of Marriage Act; and Personal Responsibility in the form of lectures to teenagers, lectures to poor single mothers, lectures to black men on Father's Day and laws that make life harder for them all. He could not "embarrass" the State of South Carolina, itself an embarrassment since slave times, enabled quite effectively in that condition over the years by politicians regardless of party.

None of this says much for Sanford, but it says a lot worse for his liberal scolds. They profess to be cosmopolitan, above the mumbo jumbo of religion, vanguardists for self-determination—to know better, in other words, all the while arguing the case for compulsory monogamy and just punishment for sexual sin more vigorously than the religionists they laugh at. "The travel partners of infidelity are shame, deception, embarrassment, hurt and heartache—ugly, negative, soul-diminishing feelings," intoned Mark Lett, executive editor of *The State*, in explaining why it was so vital for South Carolina's main newspaper to publish private communications between the governor and his lover. "There is no joy among responsible journalists in telling stories about infidelity and its seat mate, personal failure."

Of course, there is terrific joy among journalists. Nothing sells papers like a good sex scandal. But it isn't just business or just the general degradation of the political culture that has encouraged almost everyone in public life to seat themselves in moral judgment. It is also the resistance, forty years after Woodstock and Stonewall, forty-plus after the Summer of Love and the long debates on liberation and desire, to look love and marriage plainly in the face as the often embarrassing, sometimes tragic, messy, reckless, ecstatic, devastating, humdrum human endeavors that they are.

It is as if so many years of self-help, so many versions of *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*, so many couples counselors and Oprah shows and feminist promises of pleasure, so many exhortations from the Dr. Phils of the world that *Yes, you too can be happy; you just have to want it*, have rendered many people stupid, believing in uncomplicated happily-ever-afters, if only one works hard enough at it.

Into this multiply-reinforced delusion, the Sanford affair has arrived as a clarifying wind. Like most men, the governor didn't think the years of correspondence with Chapur, the regular exchange of views and observations, the small change of life passing between them, meant anything. Who knows what had become of conversation between himself and Jenny, bounded by concerns for the children and the property, politics and the next campaign? And who knows that his pen pal didn't actually help the marriage work for a time, like a release valve, allowing the homely business to prosper. *He and Jenny always seemed so happy*, people have said. Maybe they were. Maybe Maria had a part in that. If Jenny had had a boyfriend at arm's length, maybe it would still be working.

As the governor tapped the innocent e-mails, the ones before he "crossed the ultimate line," he probably believed distance was a prophylactic. But it was a leaky one, because by the time he and Chapur consummated their affair, they were longtime intimates, "the heart," as he said, making its insistent claims, and all that was left was to negotiate the terms of surrender or renunciation.

Clearly Sanford thought those were the only options, as once returned to South Carolina in the summer of 2008 he mounted his heavy equipment and went about digging holes on his plantation in a frenzy of frustration. On the one hand there was love, on the other the life; maybe he needed both and could imagine no way to reconcile the two. Now Sanford's friend and spiritual adviser Cubby Culbertson says that the Sanfords are no longer linked by feelings, that they persist in their marriage "out of obedience instead of out of passion." It is easy enough to scoff at that, easy enough to say one or the other should walk away, and maybe they should. But what is compelling about this story is its familiarity. People are foolish sometimes, or wiser than they know; sometimes they're trapped, or fearful, usually both. People who should walk away never do, and sometimes it's not so simple to say their reasons are baseless. Only a misanthrope would damn them with irony and condescension.

It would be nice to say that there is some political solution for all the Jennies and Marks and Marias, some variant on self-help in the form of open marriage, polyamory and the like. Some answer. Some sexual accommodation that vanquishes the possibility of pain. And there is, sometimes. But not always. Sometimes sex does change everything.

JOANN WYPIJEWSKI

NATION NOTES

Let's Do Lunch: Neighborhood co-ops, community gardens, farmers' markets, a streetside produce stand or a rickety crab shack—what's your most beloved food institution? Vegan, freegan, locavore, carnivore… Write us a flavorful e-mail at food@thenation.com and share your source of culinary inspiration, what you think embodies the best of our food culture. We'll publish our favorite letters in our upcoming food issue. *Bon appétit*!

Summer's Here! With this issue, we begin our biweekly schedule, which continues until the end of August.

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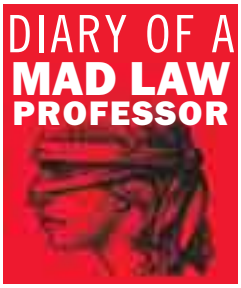
Patricia J. Williams

Mirror Man

To me, the most arresting image of Michael Jackson was President George H.W. Bush citing him as a role model for young black men.

It was 1990 and Jackson was at the height of his fame. "Man in the Mirror" had been released two years earlier. Jackson had not yet gone into full white-face disguise, but the handsome little brown boy of his first album had long since entered the bizarro phase of rhinestone gloves. I wondered then what on earth about Jackson could ever be a role model for anyone. Musical savant though he was, Jackson was, almost from the beginning, a tragic figure—so obviously trapped in that mirror, forever reflecting what others wanted him to be.

In the wake of his death, many have hailed his "crossover appeal." There is no doubt that his musical acumen led to the integration of MTV; but that "appeal" had a more sinister undertone. If Elvis was "the White Negro," so Michael fashioned himself into "the Negro Caucasian." He literally erased himself before our eyes, his nose slowly disappearing, his skin fading to ghostly pallor, his voice growing higher and whispier, his body evaporating to a dry husk of barely a hundred pounds at the time of his death. It was hard not to be fascinated by him as he molted through all possible confusions of gender, race and sexuality. But his transgressivity was more than just theater; he mimed a narrative of constant paradox and infinite suffering.



By now the stories of that suffering are well documented: Jackson's body was scarred from the abuse that his father, Joe, a former boxer, administered to him when he was a small child. Marlon, Michael's brother, wrote of one particularly chilling incident: his father held Michael upside down by one leg while punching him repeatedly. There are the stories of his father creeping in through his bedroom window at night wearing a fright mask—apparently to teach him not to leave the window open. Joe Jackson has denied ever beating any of his children, though he freely admits "whipping" them with straps and belts. According to him, "You beat someone using a stick."

No wonder Jackson grew up to resemble a walking, talking fright mask, playing with the putty of bodies, of childhood, of kindness, of trauma, of forgiveness. What remains inexplicable, however, is the absence of social, ethical or legal limit to the excesses of Jackson family life. Michael was addicted to so many painkillers that in 2007 one pharmacy sued him for back payments totaling $100,000—thirteen months of prescriptions at nearly $10,000 a month. Who were the medical professionals behind this kind of mind-boggling malpractice? Who were the surgeons who performed so many plastic surgeries on him that his nose collapsed into his skull? Doctors are ruled by an ethical obligation to "do no harm." Medicine is a practice, not a commodity fun house filled with new noses and chins and feel-good opiates to be issued like goodies from a Pez dispenser.

Fortunately, the question of medical complicity in Jackson's death is beginning to percolate in the media. Perhaps, too, his children's custody will be more closely scrutinized. It is extremely troubling to learn that Jackson's mother, Katherine—and therefore her depraved husband, Joe—has temporary custody of them. How sad it was to see Joe Jackson's disjointed, self-promoting, narcissistic interview at the Black Entertainment Awards three days after his son's demise, an occasion he used to push his nascent record company.

But in the longer term, the question of Michael Jackson's children is challenging in other ways. Like his demands for plastic surgery or painkillers, their conception was accomplished as a made-to-order, cash-on-the-barrelhead commercial transaction. According to TMZ.com and other entertainment news sites, Jackson is not biologically related to any of his three children. Reportedly, the women who gestated them carried anonymously donated eggs fertilized by sperm from secret donors. Apparently the children were all crafted to be "white" enough to match Jackson's artfully devised if pathetically alienated image of himself. Deborah Rowe, Jackson's ex-wife and the surrogate who carried his oldest two children to term, describes being inseminated "like a horse"; she then received around $9 million to give up any claim to them. On the birth certificate of Jackson's youngest child, the space for "mother" is left blank.

It's hard to imagine that Jackson would have been found fit if he had attempted to adopt children. It is interesting to contemplate the eugenic ends to which in vitro fertilization and surrogate birth are being put these days, often as a kind of end run around the formal inspection of the adoption process. How much more common will the purchase of "the perfect child" become when bioengineering for specific physical traits becomes easier and less costly? It's not a new problem: "colorism" (preference for lighter skin) is an old problem within the African-American community. Choosing trophy spouses is a cruder version of the same game. Nevertheless, it is troubling that the law of sales is about the only context for debating this rapidly developing area. Shouldn't we think harder about the degree to which a free market for eugenics is enabled by easy-payment contract clauses conferring parenthood through the immaculate conception of biotechnology?

Jackson's fame and fortune ensured that he had few barriers to the pursuit of whatever whimsical fancy seized him. He became a more brilliant and frightening version of the Mad Hatter than even Tim Burton could conjure. And with that power, Jackson arranged for the bringing-to-life of three innocent souls whose racial embodiment pantomimed all he could never be. There's something horrifying that in the wake of his demise, his ignorant brutish father will be delivered three fair-skinned grandchildren, the perfectly rendered apotheosis of Michael's final crossing-over. ■

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Eric Alterman

How Bold Is Barack?

This just in: I've obtained a secret military report to the president musing that if only Iran could enjoy a "government based upon the consent of the governed and of a system of free enterprise," its people could achieve "the fulfillment of the principles of justice, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom from want, equality of opportunity, and to a degree, freedom from fear." Unfortunately, State Department sources dismiss the report as so much "messianic global baloney."

OK, wait a minute. I see the report was written in 1943 and was sent to President Roosevelt by Gen. Patrick Hurley. The complainer at State was the then–assistant secretary, Dean Acheson. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

Historical analogies are always imperfect, but one cannot help but be impressed by the degree to which the challenges and opportunities facing the Obama administration mirror those initially facing FDR. David Woolner of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute noted the validity of the comparison at a conference I recently attended in Hyde Park. "Both leaders have had to cope with an unprecedented global financial crisis, a deteriorating economy, high unemployment and an electorate steeped in fear and apprehension about the future. Both men have also had to contend with a worldwide security crisis, inspired in FDR's case by the pernicious ideology of fascism and in President Obama's by the rise of a deadly form of international terrorism."

Time also devoted its Independence Day cover package to the FDR/BHO analogy. Much of it is worthwhile—but being *Time*, quite a bit is misleading, particularly Amity Shlaes's all but incoherent attack on the New Deal—and leaves the overall impression that FDR faced a more intense crisis than Obama, to which he responded with way more audacity. As Adam Cohen notes, when FDR was inaugurated on March 4, 1933, all forty-eight states had ordered their banks closed. Within days, the administration had pushed its Emergency Banking Act through the House, although no finished copies of the legislation existed. Overseas, storm clouds were gathering over Berlin, Rome and Tokyo posing dangers to Western civilization that dwarfed anything we face today.

FDR's record was obviously a mixed one. Much of what he did failed, and his administration did not succeed in ending the Great Depression. What it did succeed in doing, as historian David Kennedy points out, was to lay the groundwork for the decades of prosperity that followed World War II. Kennedy writes, "All the major New Deal reforms that endured had a common purpose…to temper for generations thereafter what F.D.R. called the 'hazards and vicissitudes' of life. By creating the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the New Deal provided more confidence to bank depositors. With the Securities and Exchange Commission, it guaranteed more reliable information for investors. The Federal Housing Administration gave more protection to mortgage lenders and thus more options to home buyers. The National Labor Relations Board brought more stability to dealings between capital and labor. The Fair Labor Standards Act ensured more predictable wages for the most vulnerable workers. And Social Security offered at least a minimal safety net for both the unemployed and the elderly."

Though he is revered by liberals today, Roosevelt was essentially anti-ideological, committed only to what he called "bold, persistent experimentation." Obama, too, is a pragmatist as well as an experimentalist. But is he sufficiently bold to face the myriad crises left him by eight years of the most destructive presidential rule in America's history?

Obama embraced the enormously expensive Bush TARP plan to save Wall Street, but his stimulus plan to help Main Street proved far less ambitious. A bolder approach would have demanded that public investment—focusing on green energy, school construction and mass transit—be of equivalent scope and scale. Much the same can be said of the administration's minimalist approach to reregulating the banking sector, its refusal to consider any kind of single-payer healthcare plan and its polluter-friendly cap-and-trade approach to reducing climate change.

Obama has taken some brave steps in foreign affairs, including his Cairo University speech, in which he not only reached out to a billion Muslims around the world but demanded that Israel cease expanding illegal settlements. But President Obama has proffered far less audacious proposals than we were led to expect from candidate Obama. His approach to civil liberties, for instance, is difficult to distinguish from that of the Bush administration—and may even include indefinite detention without trial. And as Adam Nagourney writes in the *New York Times*, "The Obama White House in particular is reluctant to embrace gay rights issues now, officials there say, because they do not want to provide social conservatives a rallying cry while the president is trying to assemble legislative coalitions on healthcare and other initiatives."

Again, the FDR/BHO analogy is imperfect. FDR did not face an army of lobbyists seeking to thwart his every move. Perhaps more important, he did not have to succeed in today's media environment, in which nut cases like Limbaugh/O'Reilly/Hannity manage to set the terms of debate. As sage *Washington Post* pundit E.J. Dionne Jr. explains, the MSM's proclivity for giving the "right wing's rants…wall-to-wall airtime" gives its ignorance and recidivism legitimacy despite its failure under Bush as well as its lack of support among the larger public. The net result is a political discourse that ranges "from the moderate left to the far right" with no room for the kind of bold "persistent experimentation" needed to rescue America from the catastrophes it faces after eight years of incompetence, extremism and corruption enabled by a proudly clueless but uneducable punditocracy. ■

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Iran's Green Wave

ROBERT DREYFUSS

Just before midnight on a Friday evening a week before Iran's much-disputed June 12 election, the initial tremors of the earthquake that has shaken the country to its core were palpable deep in south Tehran, a gritty, working-class section of the city with a reputation for being a stronghold of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Past shuttered shops and empty, debris-strewn sidewalks, a late-night stream of cars, trucks and motorcycles, engines revving, horns honking, roared along the wide boulevard. From open car windows emerged shouts and cheers, raised fists and hands brandishing posters of opposition contender Mir-Hossein Moussavi's bearded, smiling visage. In the traffic ahead of us, a ramshackle open-air panel truck transported at least two dozen Ahmadinejad supporters clad in T-shirts, jeering at their opponents. As I traveled north from sprawling Imam Khomeini Square up to Ferdowsi Square and on the miles-long Vali Asr Street, the scene was similar. In a country not known for street politics, the tableau was stunning. My Iranian companion, an older man with years of experience in his country's affairs, smiled and shook his head. "This is something new," he said.

Indeed. Just over a year ago, when I visited Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan and Qom on the eve of the March 2008 parliamentary elections, I spoke to scores of Iranians who were glumly considering whether to drag themselves to the polls and vote for the least-bad candidate or, more likely, not bother to vote at all. In 2009 the contrast could not have been more stark. The city was electric. Into the wee hours tens of thousands campaigned in a citywide free-for-all. Every morning Tehran was abuzz with the latest election news. Men crowded around newsstands to read the headlines and to discuss the previous night's candidate debate. Just inside the main gate to Tehran University, two days before the election, a middle-aged guard who had lost a leg in the war with Iraq in the 1980s marveled at the thousands of students marching past, flying green banners in support of Moussavi's reformist movement. "*Enghelab!*" he said, nodding. "It's a revolution!" It's a word I'd hear over and over again, from students, office workers, taxi drivers and passersby—before, during and after the election.

Of course, it's not a revolution—not yet, anyway. Although opposition crowds swelled from several tens of thousands at pre-election rallies to perhaps a million or more afterward, the regime controls a vast repressive apparatus. It includes the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC); the police; the paramilitary, mosque-based Basij; vigilante groups like Ansar-e Hezbollah; the army; and a much-dreaded intelligence service, VEVAK, which was responsible for the assassination of hundreds of dissidents and activists in the 1990s. It's a fearsome machine prepared to enforce the dictums of Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the *rahbar* (Leader), who warned a week after the election that street protests would no longer be tolerated.

And the opposition's leaders are not exactly revolutionaries. The coalition ranged against Khamenei and Ahmadinejad is a kind of counter-establishment representing a huge split within Iran's secular and clerical elites. It includes the reformists, led by Moussavi, who served as prime minister during the tumultuous and violently repressive 1980s, and Mehdi Karroubi, a cleric and former speaker of Parliament, both of whom ran against Ahmadinejad. It includes relatively moderate, pragmatic conservatives and the wealthy business elite, typified by the behind-the-scenes role of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the wily billionaire mullah and wheeler-dealer who was president in the 1990s. And it includes many hardline conservatives from the so-called "principlist" faction, which previously lined up behind Ahmadinejad but this time rallied behind opposition candidate Mohsen Rezai, a founder of the IRGC, who has been bitterly critical of the president and who at least initially claimed election fraud.

But there's no denying that for the first time since the 1978–79 revolution, which led to the Islamic Republic, Iran's leadership is confronted with an explosive and unpredictable challenge: from below, a mass movement whose street energy and high-tech organizing savvy spread from Tehran to Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad and other cities. And within the elite there is a swelling wave of dissatisfaction with the narrow-minded radicals in power, who are blamed for having squandered the country's oil wealth, mismanaged its economy and forced Iran into a crippling regime of sanctions that have walled it off from the technology and foreign investment it desperately needs.

As a result, Iran is at a crossroads.

In one direction is a slide toward greater xenophobia and ultra-nationalism, in part because the radical forces stirred up among Ahmadinejad's electoral base will be hard to put back in the box. The broad consensus behind Iran's system of rule-by-clergy has been shattered, and the Khamenei-Ahmadinejad regime has lost its legitimacy. To shore up support, it's blaming various greater and lesser satans in the United States, Europe and Israel for Iran's troubles, making it exceedingly difficult for the country to re-establish ties to the West. At best, Iran will remain embroiled in the stalemate it has faced since 2005, with the economy continuing to unravel. At worst, it could fall into North Korea–like isolation, with fundamentalists and the security establishment preaching that subsistence-level eco-

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Russell Simmons is a longstanding Nation reader.

(Legally speaking, of course, everything has an owner, but as a *Nation* editor once wrote, "it is one of the superb facts about *The Nation* that you can no more 'own' it than you can own the spirit it represents.")

nomic privation must be endured for the sake of Islamic purity.

At the very least, the clergy-run, quasi-democratic Iranian state has been replaced by something that looks a lot more like a military dictatorship. Since his election in 2005, Ahmadinejad has installed scores of ex-commanders from the IRGC throughout government ministries and as governors and local officials in all thirty provinces. Ahmadinejad's cronies have created a powerful clique loyal to Khamenei but, at the same time, encircling the office of the Leader. The conventional wisdom—that the Leader is the all-powerful commander in chief, while the president is an elected figurehead with little real power—may be tilting, if it has not already been turned on its head.

In the other direction, a victory by the opposition—as unlikely as it appears in the wake of the regime's crackdown—might let in a lot of fresh air. It could smooth the path for an accord with the West, pave the way toward greater cultural and civil liberties, and reverse the downward economic spiral. Under this scenario, Iran could still cling to much of its current form of government, though it would be less rigid. But what scares many conservatives, and no doubt much of the establishment, is that this time it might not be so easy to stuff the genie of reform back into its bottle. A large number of those supporting Moussavi—it's impossible to know how many—want far more than reform. They want an end to the very idea of an Islamic Republic. Their hero is Mohammad Mossadegh, the prime minister who nationalized Iran's oil in 1951, challenged the shah and was toppled in a coup by MI-6 and the CIA in 1953. Reform in Iran is a slippery slope, and once reforms get started the very fabric of the Islamic Republic could unravel.

It's that scenario that Khamenei, Ahmadinejad and their IRGC and Basij allies are determined to resist at all costs. And they're prepared to unleash Tiananmen Square levels of violence to make sure it doesn't happen.

A few days before the vote, as Moussavi's "Green Wave" began to crest, there were already signs that things might get ugly. On June 9 a widely reported leak from the Interior Ministry said that Ayatollah Mohammad-Taqi Mesbah Yazdi had issued a fatwa permitting vote counters to manipulate the results in favor of the candidate who is truly a devotee of Islam. "To you, as administrators of the election, everything is permitted to this end," Mesbah Yazdi wrote. The ayatollah, who is Ahmadinejad's chief sponsor among the clerical elite in Qom, Iran's religious capital, is also godfather to a network of scholars and activists from the ideologically rigid Haqqani School, which he established. For that network—which includes many of Ahmadinejad's IRGC allies—the word of Mesbah Yazdi is law. The following day, June 10, Yadollah Javani, ideological czar of the IRGC, issued a warning that the regime was prepared to take strong action against the Green Wave movement, which had burst onto the scene to back Moussavi. "There are many indications that some extremist [i.e., reformist] groups have designed a 'color' revolution," said Javani. "Any attempt at a velvet revolution will be nipped in the bud." It was a chilling reminder of who had the guns.

It was clear by nightfall on election day, June 12, that some-

Robert Dreyfuss is a Nation *contributing editor. Research support was provided by the Investigative Fund at The Nation Institute.*

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thing was wrong. Across Tehran, troop transports rumbled out of the IRGC's fortified bases. Before the polls had even closed, Tehran took on the air of an occupied city. Later that night, ominously, my cellphone went dead, like everyone else's. Not long past midnight, the Interior Ministry declared Ahmadinejad the victor, crediting him with nearly two-thirds of a record turnout, having accomplished the near-magical feat of counting tens of millions of paper ballots in a couple of hours. Later that day, as outrage over what was widely seen as a manipulated result rippled across the city, Khamenei confirmed Ahmadinejad's win. Hundreds of thousands poured into the streets in protest.

"Moussavi and Karroubi had earlier established a joint committee to protect the people's votes," Ibrahim Yazdi, who was foreign minister in the early days after the revolution and who now leads the suppressed Freedom Movement of Iran, told me. "Many young people volunteered to work on that committee. But the authorities didn't let it happen. Last night [election night] the security forces closed it down." Describing what the regime did as a "coup d'état," he said, "The security forces occupied the offices of many newspapers, to make sure their reports on the election were favorable. They changed many headlines." Over the next days newspapers were closed, Internet sites blocked or disabled and opposition campaign offices attacked and shuttered. Hundreds of officials, journalists and dissidents—perhaps as many as 2,000—were arrested, including Yazdi.

Some analysts argue that Ahmadinejad may have won, citing his populist appeal, but that's farfetched. An analysis prepared by Chatham House in London argues persuasively that the vote was skewed, comparing it with the totals for 2005. It showed that, in at least ten provinces, in order to have amassed the totals given him, Ahmadinejad would have had to win all the voters who backed him in 2005, all the voters who last time voted for Rafsanjani, all the voters who last time sat out the election and didn't vote at all, and—varying by province—up to 44 percent of the voters who in 2005 backed the reformist slate. Other analyses piled up similar anomalies. One employee of the Interior Ministry told reporters that the ministry "didn't even look at the vote" but made up the numbers. Said Yazdi, "The counting of the votes took place in the personal office of the minister of the interior, with only two aides present."

Exactly one week after the election, Khamenei threw down the gauntlet, forbidding street protests and warning of "bloodshed." He added, "Nothing can be changed. It's finished, the presidential campaign." Dashing the hopes of reformers and oppositionists that Khamenei might toss Ahmadinejad overboard to calm the protests, the Leader has steadfastly held to his stance, denouncing peaceful demonstrators as "terrorists" backed by Zionists, "evil" Britain and the CIA. In so doing, Khamenei tethered himself to Ahmadinejad's presidency, abandoning the pretense that the Leader is above the fray of petty politics. It was as if he'd painted a target on his forehead. In the streets a daring and unprecedented insult to the country's Leader was heard for the first time in the Islamic Republic: "Death to Khamenei!"

Within ten days of the election, though, the street protests had withered under the unrelenting muscle of the IRGC and the Basij. The regime choked off virtually all opposition communications, arrested most of Moussavi's campaign staff, shuttered his newspaper and banned him from state-controlled radio and TV. Basij thugs invaded homes to beat people who, at night, climbed to the rooftops to shout their defiance. Round one, at least, seemed to have been won by Khamenei and Ahmadinejad.

As recently as May, Mir-Hossein Moussavi—an architect, artist and president of the Iranian Academy of the Arts, who speaks Farsi, English, Arabic and Turkish fluently—could not have imagined himself leading a throng of followers, some of them calling for the downfall of Khamenei. But in the election's aftermath Moussavi declared his willingness to be a "martyr," urged his supporters to take to the streets and issued a series of stirring manifestoes. "A reference point in history is being shaped these days and nights," Moussavi proclaimed. In direct defiance of Khamenei's proclamation that the election was over, he said, "I insist that nullifying the election, and recasting the votes, is a nonnegotiable right." And he denounced the bloody assaults on peaceful demonstrators.

He'd come a long way.

Days after the June 12 election, Tehran protesters saluted Mir-Hossein Moussavi along with former Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh, overthrown in a CIA-backed coup in 1953.

With impeccable establishment credentials honed during his stint as prime minister, Moussavi took sides in a left-versus-right split among the Iranian elite, including the clergy, that resulted in the creation of two broad factions at the end of the 1980s. The left-leaning Association of Combatant Clergy, also known as the Roohanioon, quit the more conservative Association of Militant Clergy, known as the Roohaniyat, which was loyal to the newly inaugurated Ayatollah Khamenei, who succeeded the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Republic. Among the Roohanioon leaders were Moussavi, Mohammad Khatami and a group of relatively progressive, open-minded thinkers who became known as Iran's "reformists." In 1997, at the end of Rafsanjani's presidency, the reformists' first choice to run for president was Moussavi. When he demurred, Khatami ran and—to the surprise of everyone—won overwhelmingly. Moussavi was a key adviser to President Khatami.

The hard right, egged on by Khamenei, counterattacked. It used death squads, vigilantes, secret intelligence units, the Guardian Council and the judiciary to cripple Khatami's presidency. In 2005, with the backing of the IRGC, the hardliners rallied behind the candidacy of Ahmadinejad, who after his election promptly launched a political, cultural and economic reversal. The IRGC itself became Iran's most powerful institution.

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Alongside its military might, it acquired a vast economic empire, from oil and construction to cellphone technology. Suddenly its personnel were everywhere. "The IRGC commanders, both active and retired, act as a kind of fraternity or freemasonry, wielding power that goes far beyond their official positions by virtue of the informal network they operate," an Iranian insider told me, looking to his left and right to make sure he wasn't being overheard in a busy Tehran lounge.

When Moussavi decided to run for president this past March, almost no one believed he could get traction. Though his stewardship during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s gave him cachet with veterans, like Khatami he is relatively soft-spoken, with little charisma. Secular liberals, leftists and more militant reformists looked askance at Moussavi's premiership, since it was during his tenure that some of the worst human rights abuses, including mass executions, were carried out. Although it was Khomeini, Khamenei and the secretive intelligence ministry that directed the slaughter, Moussavi did not resign or protest.

Several factors combined to make Moussavi a viable candidate. First, with organizational and financial support from the Rafsanjani family and wealthy mullahs and businessmen tired of Ahmadinejad's cronies running the economy, Moussavi built a formidable countrywide campaign machine. Second, the brilliant Green Wave strategy, designed by a 27-year-old whiz kid named Mostafa Hassani, caught fire, and soon green ribbons, armbands, headbands, scarves and flags festooned Iranian cities. "I wanted something simple, something that could be replicated even by poor people in remote villages," the long-haired, lanky Hassani told me, sitting in Moussavi's cluttered campaign headquarters during election week. And then, on June 3, Moussavi electrified Iran during an unprecedented televised debate with Ahmadinejad. With the president sitting across from him, Moussavi called Ahmadinejad a liar and accused him of pushing Iran toward "dictatorship." The next day, green-wearing crowds began chanting, "Death to the liar!" and "Death to the dictator!" Nothing like it had ever been seen in Iranian politics.

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

Moussavi had another not-so-secret weapon: his wife, Zahra Rahnavard. A noted intellectual and sculptor, Rahnavard campaigned alongside her husband, sometimes holding his hand. Clearly a liberated woman, she called for an end to the much-despised harassment of women by the cultural police and backed equal rights for women. At a vast rally in downtown Tehran, I watched her mesmerize the crowd. "We are going to make a revolution in the revolution!" she cried. "We are going to make it modern and up-to-date!" As one, tens of thousands of people chanted: "Moussavi! Rahnavard! Equal rights for men and women!" Women in pink lipstick and with blond highlights in partly uncovered hair shouted beside women in black chadors.

And then there was the Obama factor. Countless Iranians watched his June 4 Cairo speech, and its transcript was parsed word by word. By offering to respect Iran rather than locating it in the "axis of evil," Obama appealed to secular nationalists, activists seeking greater individual freedom and businessmen hungering for an end to the sanctions strangling Iran's economy. Nearly everyone I spoke with during the ten days I was in Iran brought up Obama, whether I asked or not. At a frenzied Moussavi rally in the city of Karaj, west of the capital, I met a campaign organizer, Hojatolislam Akbar Hamidi, 48, a distinguished cleric who's known Moussavi for more than twenty years. "I listened to Obama's speech, and it made me very happy," he told me. "But we're afraid that some Iranian authorities do not understand the positive message of Obama." In interviews at polling places on election day, dozens of voters praised Obama's opening to Iran. At a Tehran mosque where hundreds of people were lined up to vote, several dozen crowded around as I asked an older woman why she supported Moussavi. When I suggested, "Perhaps Moussavi and Obama might meet someday soon?" the crowd, translating for one another, erupted in cheers, laughter and thumbs-up signs.

More prosaically, many plugged-in Iranians told me that nearly the entirety of Iran's business class is fed up with Ahmadinejad's bellicose rhetoric, and they want to put an end to sanctions. Saeed Laylaz, an economist and former official at the Ministry of Industry, said that as a result of sanctions critical sectors of the economy—including computers and information technology, oil and natural gas, and civil aviation—are suffering badly. "Ahmadinejad's is the first right-wing government since the revolution, and it has been a catastrophe," he said. "You cannot run the government with populism. You need experts. You need technocrats. You need planners." (Laylaz was arrested days after the election; he's still in detention.) To get a sense of what the business community thinks, during election week I attended a forum packed with executives at the offices of *Etelaat*, a liberal newspaper, where eight former ministers of oil, industry and mining slammed the government over its incompetence. Later, at Moussavi's campaign office, one of them, Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh, who was minister of industry under Khatami, told me that he'd put his business on hold to travel across the country working for Moussavi. "I'm a businessman, and I've been reluctant to get into politics," he told me over several cups of tea. "It's the desire of most of us in the business community to rebuild relations with the United States," he said. "It doesn't mean that we have to give up our independence or our dignity."

Besides reformists, students, women and businessmen, Khamenei and Ahmadinejad are losing their core constituency: the clergy. And given that Iran is a state run by the priestly class, that might prove their undoing. I spoke to a dozen or so clerics, from low- to mid-ranking mullahs to a few who'd attained the rank of hojatolislam, just below ayatollah. There are hundreds of thou-

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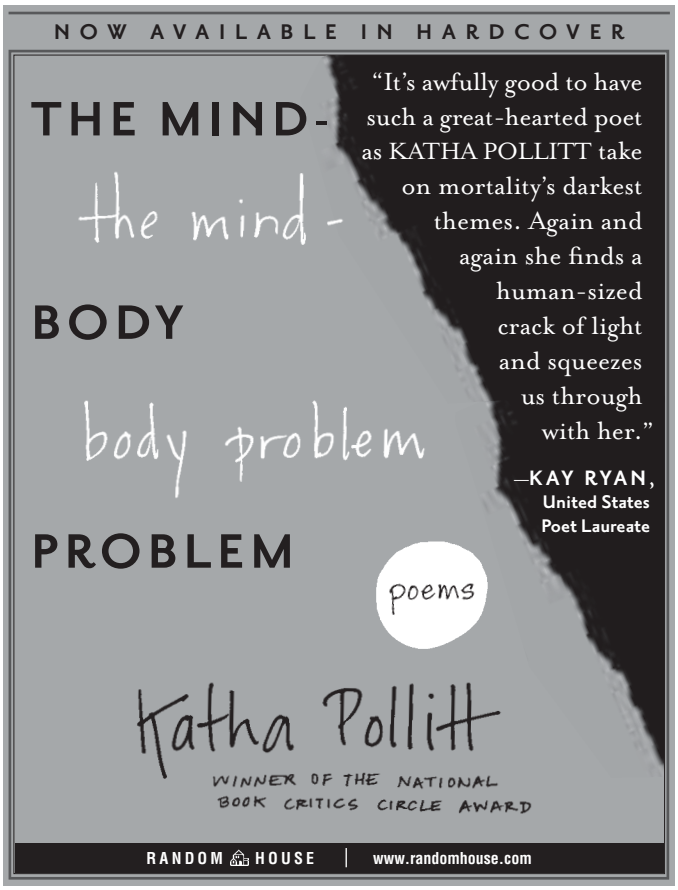
sands of mullahs in Iran, perhaps a hundred or more who have attained the rank of ayatollah, and just two dozen or so who have developed sufficient reputation and following to be called grand ayatollah. And more and more of them, including many grand ayatollahs, have joined the opposition. "After the television debates with Ahmadinejad, a large number of mullahs who'd been undecided went over to Moussavi," one hojatolislam told me. They were offended, he said, by Ahmadinejad's insulting attitude toward Moussavi—particularly his rhetorical assault on his wife, Rahnavard, whom he accused of falsifying her academic credentials—and his accusations against Rafsanjani and Khatami. "A president should be polite," the cleric told me. "Impolite behavior and ugliness cannot be accepted."

Another cleric, who campaigned for Moussavi in dozens of Iranian towns and cities, said that the majority of mullahs had abandoned the president. "There is a big gap between Ahmadinejad and the clergy," he told me. "Many of the grand ayatollahs are angry, because the president has taken many actions without consulting with them. They are especially unhappy because he has shown an aggressive face of Islam to the world, and Islam is not aggressive. It is a religion of peace." Some three-quarters of the grand ayatollahs in Iran support Moussavi, he told me. Ten of them sent a joint letter to Ahmadinejad, but he ignored them, he said. Several others have openly castigated the regime for its treatment of protesters.

A very well-connected mullah I talked with said that he is a friend and follower of Grand Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri. Back in the late 1980s, Montazeri was the designated successor to Khomeini as Iran's Leader, but hardliners—including Khomeini's son and a circle around Khamenei—ousted him, he told me, because of his liberal views and installed Khamenei. Through this mullah and several other intermediaries, both Moussavi and former president Khatami keep in close contact with Montazeri, as well as with many in the clerical establishment in Qom. In the wake of the election Moussavi and his supporters began organizing what they hoped would be a broad consensus among senior ayatollahs to force Ahmadinejad out or, if it comes to that, to replace Khamenei himself. "Khamenei does not deserve the position that he has," the mullah told me. "He has become a politician, and as a politician he has been corrupted." Describing Khamenei in these terms is extremely unusual, and indicates how much the Ahmadinejad-Khamenei axis has lost its legitimacy. "Khamenei has lost the support of many high-ranking clergy in Qom," declared Ibrahim Yazdi in my interview with him.

Trying to pull together this opposition is Rafsanjani, who so far has stayed behind the scenes but according to numerous reports from Iran is playing a critical role in efforts to counter both Ahmadinejad and Khamenei. The former president is chair of the Assembly of Experts, a group of more than eighty clerics who have the power, under Iran's Constitution, to appoint or dismiss the Leader. "Rafsanjani has convinced the majority of the Assembly of Experts and several dozen clerics in Qom to support an effort to overturn the election results," a well-connected Iranian told me. According to Yazdi and several other Iranian activists and analysts, at least some of the clergy want to replace Khamenei with a far more moderate, less political council of ayatollahs as a way of restoring consensus in the leadership [see Sarfaraz, "Iran's New Revolutionaries," in last week's issue]. It would in effect be the end of the Khomeini doctrine of *velayat-e-faqih* ("rule of the jurisprudent"), which is the underpinning of the notion of a Supreme Leader, a concept invented by Khomeini that is far outside mainstream Muslim, and even Shiite, thinking.

The turmoil in Iran surprised not only Iran's leaders but America's. So far, at least, Obama has maintained a measured tone in response to the crisis, condemning the brutality of the crackdown but reaffirming his policy of trying to establish a dialogue with Tehran. He's resisted calls from ideologues and neoconservatives to adopt a harder line, such as tougher sanctions or overt support for regime change. But realistically, the likelihood of a productive US-Iran conversation is sharply lower now, and it may be months before any such discussions take place, if they happen at all. If, as many Iranian insiders told me in Iran, Khamenei and Ahmadinejad saw value in a rapprochement with the United States before June 12, the explosion since then may have convinced them that now is not the time; at the very least, they will enter any such talks with far less willingness to compromise. On the American side, whatever Obama's intent, he is now faced with the enormously greater problem of trying to sell the idea of talks with Iran to US skeptics. "This has certainly influenced the public appetite in the US for the Iranian regime, which makes it very hard for the president to…hold the door open for dialogue," says Tom Pickering, a veteran US diplomat who's been involved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in unofficial talks with Iranian counterparts. "On the other hand, he should be taking the view, if he comes under pressure, that you should be talking to your most difficult enemies. Not talking to them punishes you and your strategic interests, not them."

If Ahmadinejad and Khamenei retain their iron grip on power, both Iran and the United States will face inevitable pressure to resume diplomacy. "On both sides, the interest in pursuing a dialogue will emerge intact," says Sir Richard Dalton, who served as Britain's ambassador in Tehran until 2006. The start of such talks might be "slightly delayed" in the aftermath of the crisis, he says, but that's hardly a tragedy.

But Obama will have to ignore calls to set a short deadline on such talks. They could easily drag on, well into the middle of next year and beyond. If talks fail to produce immediate results, the president will have to resist arguments from Israeli hardliners and their US allies to take harsh measures against Iran—including military action. Obama's earlier outreach undercut the hardliners and gave a psychological boost to Iran's reformists and to millions of Iranians who saw Moussavi as a vehicle through which to improve US-Iranian relations. If Obama wants to support the opposition, the best thing he can do is to continue to extend his open hand to Iran. ■

The Trials of Benjamin Jealous

by TA-NEHISI COATES

On a crisp Sunday morning in February, Benjamin Jealous—the president and CEO of the NAACP—stepped out of a yellow cab and made his way into Harlem's storied Abyssinian Baptist Church. He was accompanied by an assistant and a church emissary assigned to shepherd Jealous to the offices of Abyssinian's patriarch, the Rev. Calvin Butts. This was no mean feat. As Jealous walked in, right hands were extended all around, eager to press flesh.

KAREN CALDICOTT

At 36, Jealous is the youngest person ever to head the NAACP. It's a subtle nod to the hip-hop generation, a fact that seems to amaze everyone except Jealous, who hasn't had much time to rest on accolades. Since taking over the NAACP last September, he's been charged with the work of the philosopher and the yeoman. On the one hand, he's had to grapple with the purpose and mission of a civil rights organization in the age of Obama. On the other, he's been tasked with improving the NAACP's membership, finances and stability. Three of its last four leaders have left under a cloud of controversy, leaving even some allies wondering about the organization's fate. So when Jealous arrived for his meeting with Butts, it was not simply a social call for two civil rights leaders from two different generations but an act of restoration.

Butts, who's been ministering at Abyssinian since before Jealous was born, shook the younger man's hand and offered him a seat. Abyssinian is one of black America's most famous churches. It was the seat of power for Adam Clayton Powell Jr., and its services inspired Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German pastor and Nazi resister who conspired to assassinate Hitler.

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As it happens, the NAACP was in the midst of its 100th anniversary observance, and Abyssinian was in the midst of its 200th. But Butts explained that Abyssinian and the NAACP had been at loggerheads for more than fifteen years because of the actions of Jealous's predecessors. "The last NAACP president to speak from our pulpit was Benjamin Hooks," Butts said. "We tried to keep up a steady relationship. We were very involved. But a member got very angry with Ben Chavis."

Jealous nodded politely and thanked Butts for the chance to address his congregation. Butts adjusted his clothes and readied his robe for the service. His office was sprawling and gorgeous. There was a large wooden desk and portraits of Kwame Nkrumah, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and Malcolm X. There was a knock at the door, and an assistant pastor stepped in to tell the men that the time for morning service had arrived.

Jealous and the processional of church nobles were shuttled downstairs. He sat in the first row, joined by his wife and family. When Butts invited him up to speak, he ushered Jealous to a microphone in front (only preachers are granted the privilege of the pulpit). Jealous looked out and smiled and invoked the history of the NAACP, Abyssinian and the country at large.

"We would not be 100 if you weren't 200," he said. "I'm here like most of you with my head in the clouds of January 20, the day we broke down the color barrier at the White House, but with my feet firmly planted in January 21. My generation was told that all the great battles were over. And we emerged the most murdered people in the country, and the most incarcerated group on the planet."

Jealous finished his speech to broad applause and took a seat next to his family. "Thank you, brother Jealous," said Butts. "You're off to a great start."

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Jealous is stocky and over six feet tall. His high-pitched voice is at odds with his stone-serious face. When he laughs, it almost comes as a surprise. His skin is light enough that in the early '90s, when he worked as a reporter and managing editor for the *Jackson Advocate*, Mississippi's oldest black newspaper, he occasionally passed for white, digging for information beyond the reach of his colleagues. His father is the scion of a prominent white New England family whose ancestors fought at Bunker Hill. Archibald Willard, who painted *The Spirit of '76*, is a distant cousin. His mother's family traces its ties back to a plantation, and the men in her family were dignitaries during Reconstruction. Despite his lineage, Jealous is tenaciously black and takes unkindly to being called biracial.

"In my family, race and heritage are two different things," says Jealous. "My dad was clear that if he married a black woman, he'd have a black child. That was the law. But there was also a sense, on both sides of the family, that we are American."

Jealous grew up in Monterey, California, but spent a lot of time in Baltimore, where his mother was raised. His household was a bubbling caldron of politics, debate and history. Jealous's maternal grandmother would recount for him oral histories of his family's struggles under slavery and Jim Crow. Robert Watts, Baltimore's pioneering civil rights jurist, was a family friend. From the time Jealous was 4, Watts would greet him by asking, "Son, what are you prepared to argue about?"

Well, as it turned out, plenty.

Jealous lodged his first protests in first grade, over the lack of books about black history in the school library. "I never liked fairy tales. I always liked history," he recalls. "I read a lot of books themed around the bicentennial. I read all the books on my dad's family. And then I asked, 'Do you have any on my mom's family? Not the railroad slave or the peanut butter guy.' The librarian was stumped."

When Jealous was 13, he attended the birthday party of the son of McGeorge Bundy, former national security adviser to John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. "My first phrase was 'What were you thinking when you planned the Bay of Pigs invasion?'" recalls Jealous. "He said, 'You know, son, I'd rather not talk about that right now…'"

By the time Jealous was 16, he was registering voters for the NAACP. At Columbia, where Jealous went to college, he continued in the family tradition but with a kind of privileged bent that's rarely seen in black activists. When Jealous was 18, he was stopped on Columbia's campus by an FBI officer who mistook him for an Iraqi student. (Jealous had spent the previous week protesting the Gulf War.)

"I went off on him about why I looked the way I looked," says Jealous, referring to his ancestry. "That was the moment where I really realized I had ownership in this country. And for him to suggest that I didn't belong here… I went off."

This sense of ownership in America reflects the New England origins of his family, but just as important it reflects the willingness of his grandmother to discuss slavery and other aspects of the black past that older generations of African-Americans tried to forget.

In his junior year of college, Jealous led a demonstration to preserve Columbia's scholarship program for students of color. He climbed through a window of Low Memorial Hall to disrupt a board of trustees meeting and stage a sit-in, for which he was kicked out of school.

Jealous then headed to Mississippi and set his mind on acquiring some work experience. At the *Jackson Advocate*, he stayed true to the paper's name and was as much an activist as he was a reporter. He investigated the state prison system. He fought the effort to shrink Mississippi's historically black colleges. In his early 20s, he became the *Advocate*'s managing editor. Later he returned to New York; Columbia had readmitted him. A year after he left the *Advocate*, it was firebombed, allegedly by white supremacists.

Jealous went on to become a Rhodes scholar, earning his master's degree in comparative social research. He continued his reporter-activist work as head of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, a consortium of black newspapers around the country. He worked at Amnesty International USA pushing Congressional efforts to ban prison rape and racial profiling in the wake of September 11. He returned to California and served as president of the Rosenberg Foundation, which funds economic inclusion and human rights grants in California. By the time Jealous came before the NAACP board seeking its presidency in 2008, he was following the path he had started walking decades earlier with his childhood protest of his school library.

"I had known him slightly before he applied," says chairman of the board Julian Bond. "[When he] came into the room I was pleasantly surprised and taken aback with both his background registering voters when he was too young to vote himself and the fact that every professional job he's had related to what we do. He had experience in the nonprofit world. He just seemed to fit. His age was an asset. It just struck me that he was the perfect package."

The NAACP board was somewhat less impressed. Jealous's résumé—stints working for the black press, executing grants for nonprofits, lobbying for human rights—was standard for a social activist. But by the lights of the NAACP's recent history, Jealous's professional biography was peculiar and lacking. He had not pastored a church, he had held no elected office and he had no direct ties to the civil rights movement.

Jealous's candidacy was met with skepticism on everything from his experience to his skin tone. "That's been our buttress, our hope and our faith—the black church," NAACP board member Amos Brown told the *Christian Science Monitor*. "However, under the leadership of Julian Bond, that relationship has been shattered, ignored and fractured.… You are going to bring someone on board who can't inspire somebody?… He hasn't led no movement, he hasn't led no cause where black folks can say, 'This is where the man was.' A leader is out front where the people can see him. Nobody knows Benjamin Jealous."

The board ultimately split 34 to 21 in Jealous's favor. But his reward was a mixed bag. The NAACP, as a social justice organization, had tremendous clout. But for the past two decades

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it had mostly been led by a succession of unsteady leaders. Benjamin Chavis followed the esteemed Benjamin Hooks in 1993 and plotted to steer the NAACP toward a younger generation. But Chavis was forced out a year later after he was found to have used NAACP funds to settle a sexual harassment suit. He was followed by Myrlie Evers (widow of Medgar Evers), seen as a stabilizing force. She in turn was followed by Kweisi Mfume, whose tenure ended in 2004 amid accusations of sexual impropriety (it was alleged that Mfume rewarded sexual partners with plum jobs). Jealous's predecessor, Bruce Gordon, lasted just nineteen months.

Moreover, when Jealous was handed the reins, the NAACP was in its third year of having to dip into its endowment to continue operations. In 2007 the group laid off more than a third of its staff and closed several regional offices. And beyond the nuts-and-bolts problems, the NAACP was in the midst of the latest flare-up of an existential crisis that has haunted it since the days of W.E.B. Du Bois, its founder, one that has become more acute in the era of Obama.

The NAACP made its name by tackling the structural arms of white supremacy—segregation, job and housing discrimination, disenfranchisement. Its favored arsenal was not the direct action of Martin Luther King Jr. but the jurisprudence of Charles Hamilton Houston and Thurgood Marshall.

"The NAACP was historically averse to public demonstrations," says historian and Du Bois biographer David Levering Lewis. "It preferred galas, social events, tithing its members. The idea of marching and voluntarily being incarcerated was alien and to a large degree anathema. This is not because of a lack of personal conviction or courage. The idea was, the best way to change society was collaboration."

The NAACP's focus on collaboration led to several splits over the years, most famously between Du Bois and Walter White. Du Bois, tired of the seemingly endless fights for integration, embraced separation for African-Americans and a focus on improving the black community. White pressed for integration; he ultimately prevailed, and Du Bois left the organization. But that basic conflict of practical community reform versus moral national reform has often plagued the NAACP internally and been invoked by its critics externally.

The criticism has assumed new life in the post–civil rights era. As the vestiges of white supremacy have fallen away, in large measure because of the NAACP's efforts, blacks have grown more concerned about the achievement gap, violence in their communities and fatherlessness. But the NAACP has remained focused almost entirely on its core civil rights agenda—at times to the chagrin of its membership.

When Gordon came to the helm, he envisioned a program to make the NAACP more relevant by tackling new problems like the dropout rate, the plight of black men and HIV awareness. But Gordon ran into stiff opposition from NAACP officials, Bond chief among them, who feared that the group was moving away from social justice and into "social service." A year and a half after he was brought on board, Gordon, who did not respond to inquiries for this article, resigned.

"I think people generally like social service," says Bond. "White, black, liberal, conservative, they all like social service—Habitat for Humanity, for instance. It can be done quickly, whereas social justice can take years. There's nothing wrong with social service. But we are one of the few organizations focusing on social justice."

Given his youth and his history of confrontations with power, one might think Jealous would strike a pose more radical than Bond's. That would be a mistake. "We're motivated by the problems facing the black community, but our goal is a fully functioning democracy," Jealous says. "Our goal is a government that works for everybody. If the government worked better, we wouldn't need many of these services."

"The reality is that you can leverage way more change out of federal government, state government, even a county government, than you can leverage charitable dollars to solve those problems," says Jealous. "In fact, many of those problems you can't even solve with charitable dollars.… I'm talking about mass incarceration, for instance."

Jealous and Bond essentially argue that the only legitimate avenue for social change is government policy—hence the notion that if the government worked right, "social service" would be unnecessary. Post–civil rights African-Americans have grown increasingly impatient with this line of thinking. The weakness in the NAACP's perspective is that it depends on a sympathetic government ear. The NAACP's victory in *Brown v. Board of Education*, for example, was the result of some brilliant legal arguments, but it was also the result of a court willing to listen. In the wake of the conservative counterrevolution, the NAACP hasn't been able to count on that sort of sympathy.

Despite a few flirtations with change, the NAACP never altered its strategy. Thus, while it persisted in advocating for a fully functioning democracy, blacks continued to suffer. For African-Americans who push for some kind of community-based approach to tackle violence in their community or to close the achievement gap, the NAACP has had little to say.

Even in areas where the NAACP has traditionally had a presence, its reputation has been eroded by broader changes in society and among African-Americans. In the era of Facebook and Twitter, it's not clear that one messianic figure or one organization can articulate the concerns of millions. Indeed, the millions are more likely to simply do it themselves. "When people needed to organize for the Jena Six, they did it themselves," says cultural critic Mark Anthony Neal. "Their first choice wasn't the NAACP."

The NAACP is, in some ways, boxed in by its very name. If an association claims as its mission the "advancement of colored people," people expect the group not to get hung up on tactics. Jealous believes that the NAACP can address certain issues better that it has ignored in the past—HIV awareness, for instance. But for all his youth and idiosyncrasies, his basic outlook on the NAACP's mission is very traditional.

"There's a lot of people out there who would like to see the NAACP as some sort of alternative government or government service provider for black people," Jealous says. "That's exactly what we've been fighting against for a century."

But living in a new century, the fight may have to change. ■

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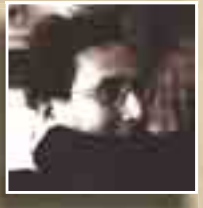

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Mr. Sanford's Wild Ride

The rise and precipitous fall of the adulterous, anti-stimulus governor of South Carolina.

by PAUL WACHTER

Add the name Mark Sanford to the ever-expanding list of politicians done in by extramarital dalliances. On June 24 the South Carolina governor and potential 2012 Republican presidential candidate resurfaced after a weeklong disappearance—during which his staff and family denied knowledge of his whereabouts—and announced that he had flown to Argentina to rendezvous with a woman with whom he had been having an affair. At the press conference, a shaken Sanford apologized for his indiscretion, though he acknowledged that his wife, Jenny, had known about the affair and that they had sought counseling. "I've spent the last five days of my life crying in Argentina," he said. "I am committed to trying to get my heart right."

KAREN CALDICOTT

Sanford immediately resigned as chair of the Republican Governors Association, and a day later he pledged to reimburse the state for a government-funded trip he'd taken to Argentina in 2008. It remains unclear whether he will survive the mounting calls for his resignation, though it's almost certain the exposed infidelity has torpedoed any chance he might have had of attaining the Republican presidential nomination.

But if now is the time to write Sanford's political obituary, it would be a disservice to place so much emphasis on his affair. What brought Sanford to national prominence and prompted Republican National chair Michael Steele to anoint him as a rising star was the months-long, headline-grabbing campaign Sanford led to turn down portions of the Obama administration's stimulus funds. His stance played well among the fiscal conservatives who rallied behind the "tea party" protests this past spring, but many South Carolinians questioned the judgment of a governor who was willing to turn away money (jobs, really) designated for a state that desperately needs it and that boasts the nation's third-highest rate of unemployment. In order to establish his economic bona fides among conservatives, it seemed, Sanford was prepared to run his state's economy into the ground.

The showdown ended June 4, when the South Carolina Supreme Court ordered Sanford to apply for the disputed $700 million earmarked for his state. As questions mounted about the governor's absence, his staff initially said he was hiking the Appalachian Trail to recharge after the defeat. But if there is an irony to be found in Sanford's rambling public apology, it's not the standard tale of comeuppance. Rather, it's that he was finally asking South Carolinians for forgiveness—but for the wrong reasons.

Paul Wachter, a South Carolina native, lives in New York and writes for The New York Times Magazine *and other publications.*

Young, handsome and rich, Sanford swept into the House as part of the 1994 Republican revolution. A firm believer in the Contract With America—the party leadership's paean to limited government—he pledged to serve no more than three terms. Yet even by his own reckoning, his time in Congress was undistinguished. *The Trust Committed to Me*, an autobiographical account of his six years in Congress, is a strange political memoir—a masochist's chronicle of one legislative failure after another. In the fights over term limits (for), sugar subsidies (against), Congressional pay raises (against), Social Security reform (for) and the pork-laden highway bill (against), Sanford was always on the losing side—opposed not only by Democrats but often by his own party, which enjoyed a majority in both houses.

Among his former colleagues, Sanford's Congressional days are remembered for his public displays of frugality: he trimmed office staff, helped stop the daily delivery of ice to Congressional offices, slept on a futon in his office and showered at the House gym. "It was one gimmick to the next, and I never thought there was much substance to him," said House majority whip James Clyburn of South Carolina.

Until the recent stimulus kerfuffle, Sanford's years as governor had been most notable for public theatrics, as well. In May 2004, a day after the Republican-led House overrode 105 of Sanford's 106 budget vetoes, the governor carried two piglets into the Statehouse chambers to protest "pork-barrel spending." (That the pigs proceeded to defecate on the governor struck some miffed lawmakers as poetic justice.) The following year, he brought a horse and buggy to the Statehouse, saying it symbolized the state's "outdated" Constitution and ways of governance. At first, it looked like the governor's recent "disappearance" was yet another in his long résumé of zany but harmless capers.

"Sanford's ideal for a perfect South Carolina would find the state with very limited government, no income taxes, limited roles for public education and little governmental involvement with job creation," wrote *S.C. Statehouse Report* publisher Andy Brack in 2005. In less dire economic times the governor's fiscal austerity resonated with many South Carolinians. But as the economy tanked, his style of governance, which can best be described as obstructionist, has proved costly.

One sunny morning in late April, I attended a job fair at Columbia's National Guard Armory, not far from the Statehouse. Hundreds of down-on-their-luck South Carolinians went from booth to booth discovering that for every company hiring—Verizon was looking for sales staff—there were others

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pitching training programs with no guarantee of a paycheck.

As he was leaving, I spoke with Gary Grimes, 55, who had been laid off seven months earlier from his job at Flextronics, a multinational manufacturing company with a plant in West Columbia. He and his wife, who had also recently lost her job, were scraping by on food stamps and unemployment insurance—insurance that Sanford had threatened in December to cut off unless the state agency that disbursed unemployment checks agreed to a new audit. (On January 1, just hours before the fund was to run out, Sanford capitulated and applied for a $146 million federal loan.) A lifelong Republican, Grimes was puzzled by Sanford's stance on the stimulus. "I know we'll have to pay the money back later, but at the same time, the state's hurting and we need the money," he said. "It looks like the governor's just playing politics."

I spent that afternoon in the observation balcony of the State Senate chambers alongside children from Greenville's Welcome Elementary School. The third graders were on a field trip, and they caused a brief commotion as they leaned over the railing to take photos. The august men below—there's not a single woman in the State Senate—were debating the 2009–10 appropriations bill. Tax revenue had plummeted; even though the $5.7 billion spending plan the Legislature passed included the $700 million in federal funds, it fell about $1 billion short of the previous year's plan.

Congress has mandated that the disputed $700 million—one-tenth of the total allocated for South Carolina under the $787 billion federal stimulus package, but the only part the governor believed was within his power to reject—be disbursed over two years for education and law enforcement. Sanford wanted to redirect the money to pay down state debt, and he stood prepared to see it go to other states even though South Carolinians would still have been on the hook to pay it back. "Going further into debt will not solve a problem that was created by too much debt," he said in a televised address defending his position.

But the governor's position was not a popular one in South Carolina. His approval rating had fallen to 40 percent by April, and other GOP lawmakers were questioning his priorities. South Carolina's AAA credit rating places it among states with the lowest general-obligation debt, and it is not unduly burdensome, said State Treasurer Converse Chellis. "If my house was burning down, I don't get in my car and drive to the bank to pay off the mortgage," added GOP State Senator Hugh Leatherman, chair of the budget-writing committee. "I try to put out the fire."

Leatherman's metaphor was apt, because South Carolina was going up in flames—literally. At the very moment the legislators were deliberating, the state's worst wildfire in more than thirty years was raging around Myrtle Beach. Months earlier, state forester Gene Kodama had warned that budget cuts at the Forestry Commission put the state "in a very vulnerable position," and now, at a moment of need, he was making do with fewer firefighters and creaky equipment. (More than $500,000 of the disputed stimulus money was allocated to the Forestry Commission, Sanford's critics were quick to point out.)

Given the state's suffering and Sanford's insouciance, it struck me even before the revelation of the affair that he would not easily win another statewide office, let alone the presidency. Still, when I pressed Gary Grimes, he conceded he'd have a hard time voting for Obama over Sanford—or any Republican. "It's not that I'm a fan of the governor. It's just that Democrats are pro-abortion, and unless they change that, they'll never get my vote."

Sanford is not likely to exploit the cultural wedge issues that concern voters like Grimes, a fact that distinguishes him from Sarah Palin, Mike Huckabee and other culture warriors who might have rivaled him for the presidential nomination. Last year, for instance, he declined to add his signature to a bill endorsing an "I Believe" line of vanity license plates bearing the image of a cross. "It is my personal view that the largest proclamation of one's faith ought to be in how one lives his life," said Sanford, an Episcopalian. (Now that he has exposed himself as an adulterer, Sanford admits he fell short of his own standards and speaks of his indiscretions as "sins.")

In secular matters, Sanford also bucks Republican orthodoxy. He says he doesn't believe in pre-emptive war and advocates a "conservationist" environmental agenda. Earlier this year the Sierra Club applauded Sanford's "bold decision" to oppose a coal plant planned for the state's Pee Dee River area. And after Rush Limbaugh announced his hope that Obama would fail as president, Sanford said, "Anyone who wants [Obama] to fail is an idiot, because it means we're all in trouble."

It's the rare Republican official who stands up to Limbaugh, and Sanford must have known he'd have a much better shot at becoming president if the radio host's wishes came true. After the 2008 election, exit polls showed that three of five voters said the economy was their top concern, and that remains true today. President Obama will not likely see a primary challenge, which means he won't have to face the argument—advanced by Nobel Prize laureates Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz, among others—that $787 billion does not go far enough toward righting the economy. The likely Republican attack will draw on Chicago School economics, calling for less government meddling in the markets.

Until the recent scandal, Sanford had positioned himself as the most credible Republican to make such an attack in 2012. "Sanford's onto something—he's part of a national shift that's taken me by surprise," Grover Norquist, founder of Americans for Tax Reform, told me several weeks ago. "It used to be taxes that upset people, but the tea parties, which occurred before any tax hikes, demonstrated that it's government spending itself that bothers Americans."

Some compared Sanford and his devoted following to the buzz surrounding Texas Congressman Ron Paul's 2008 bid for the Republican nomination. "There's some similarity there, though I think Paul has more exotic views," said Patrick Caddell, Jimmy Carter's pollster and a frequent Fox News guest.

Now, however, Sanford has become only the latest casualty in a dwindling list of 2012 Republican hopefuls. Another potential candidate, Nevada Senator John Ensign, resigned his Senate leadership position earlier in June, after acknowledging an extramarital affair. Two other prominent Republican governors who have refused portions of the stimulus, Louisiana's Bobby Jindal and Texas's Rick Perry, have also seen their presidential chances hurt by recent public appearances. Many Republicans were underwhelmed by Jindal's widely televised

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reply to the president's first address to Congress in February, and Perry's allusions to possible Texan secession at a tea party rally likely constitutes an insurmountable gaffe.

Whether or not he manages to serve out his term, Sanford is unlikely to hold another office. But perhaps he can take solace in the credo of the US Term Limits Foundation, which published his memoir in 2000: "Remember, every town councilman wants to be a congressman; every congressman wants to be a senator; and every senator wants to be president." It's an indictment of political ambition, and until very recently it applied even to Mark Sanford, the self-described "citizen legislator" and reluctant politician who has never lost an election.

Ultimately, it was Sanford's personal foibles, not his political ones, that prompted a search for empathy. As he choked back tears in front of the Statehouse rotunda, Sanford said he would spend the days ahead traveling the state, talking to South Carolinians and asking for forgiveness.

"Governor Mark Sanford, fully aware of the consequences of his failure, told the truth with apparent contrition…and contrition is a start," the Palmetto Family Council, a faith-based foundation devoted to "defending and strengthening South Carolina families," said in its sympathetic statement issued after news of the governor's affair broke.

"I doubt this holier-than-thou group would be so understanding if he was a Democrat," said Andy Brack. But Brack, a relentless Sanford critic, doesn't believe the governor should resign. "It's a personal matter, and we shouldn't take our eyes off what's really troubling this state—a horrible education system, record unemployment and a looming healthcare crisis."

In his time as governor, Sanford has done little to improve the situation. Even though he lost the stimulus battle, his obstinacy cost the state desperately needed jobs. Before the courts weighed in, school districts had already announced they were giving up on the funds, laying off teachers and increasing class sizes. "We've had to make hiring decisions for the next school year with the money in limbo," said state superintendent Jim Rex. Other state agencies faced the same dilemma.

Before he vetoed the stimulus money, Sanford received a letter from the state's second-most-powerful Republican, State Senator Glenn McConnell, imploring him to take the federal funds. "While the attacks you have launched may have been intended to build your national image as a reformer, in the final analysis, the work of a true reformer is measured not by words or TV ads or by press releases but by what he or she has been able to accomplish in the arena of public service or for the people he or she represents," McConnell wrote. The letter identifies the qualities missing from the governor's political DNA—an ability to lead, which often necessitates compromise, and any semblance of empathy for the less fortunate citizens he represents—that are incumbent upon all presidential aspirants to at least pretend to possess. ■

Letters

(continued from page 2)

Battle for History at the end of a long review of *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America* by John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr and Alexander Vassiliev ["Red Harvest," May 25]. Guttenplan states that my "willingness to write an entire book on the case without ever examining the evidence—strongly suggests that we are still far from living in a sane world. At least as far as Alger Hiss is concerned." A reader who believes in guilt by association might well infer from Guttenplan's comment that I share the views of Haynes et al. about the threat to US interests posed by Soviet operatives (or fellow travelers) in the 1930s and throughout the cold war. I do not.

One of my major points—which Guttenplan did not mention—was that the right and the left share a touching faith in the reliability of classified documents from intelligence agencies. I wouldn't judge anyone or anything on the basis of any reports in CIA or KGB files, and that goes for the current controversy over what the CIA did or did not tell Congress about waterboarding in 2002.

What remains compelling and interests me about the Hiss case, as I stated clearly in my introduction, is its status as a litmus test of political loyalties, over five decades, for both the right and the left. My focus was on the controversy as it played out in the media and academia. As for re-evaluating the so-called facts of the case, I shall leave it to those who believe that intelligence files are a faithful record of reality—as long as the reality happens to coincide with their own political views. Seek and ye shall find.

Susan Jacoby

Cambridge, Mass.

Nearing the end of my ninety-ninth year, I wonder if my memory is reliable. It tells me I.F. Stone in his late years moved to Athens and learned Greek so he could read about Socrates in the original. He published a small book about this, which I owned once upon a time. Guttenplan doesn't mention this in his interesting account, so I have to ask, Is my memory wrong?

James H. Tipton

Guttenplan Replies

London

I'm glad Susan Jacoby shares my skepticism about the reliability of classified documents. Certainly I.F. Stone's FBI file was filled with self-serving (and untrue) assertions by various agents and informants. But given her views, I'm surprised by her reluctance to assess the remaining evidence of Hiss's guilt. I'm not a defender of Hiss—or an admirer of Haynes and Klehr. But at least they understand that for partisans on either side, the evidence is central.

James Tipton is mostly right. Stone didn't move to Athens, but he did teach himself ancient Greek and publish *The Trial of Socrates*, a surprise bestseller, at age 80. I don't recall it being a small volume, but then I can't seem to remember who borrowed my copy…

D.D. Guttenplan

How Many Critiques on the Head of a Pin?

Chicago

When you published William Deresiewicz's reply to Vivian Gornick's response to Deresiewicz's misgivings about James Wood's literary interpretations ["Exchange," June 8], you were printing a critique of a critique of a critique of a critique, if I count correctly. Do we dare break the chain? Can you be dragged back to earth, or are you lost beyond rescue in the realms of academic argle-bargle?

David Stein

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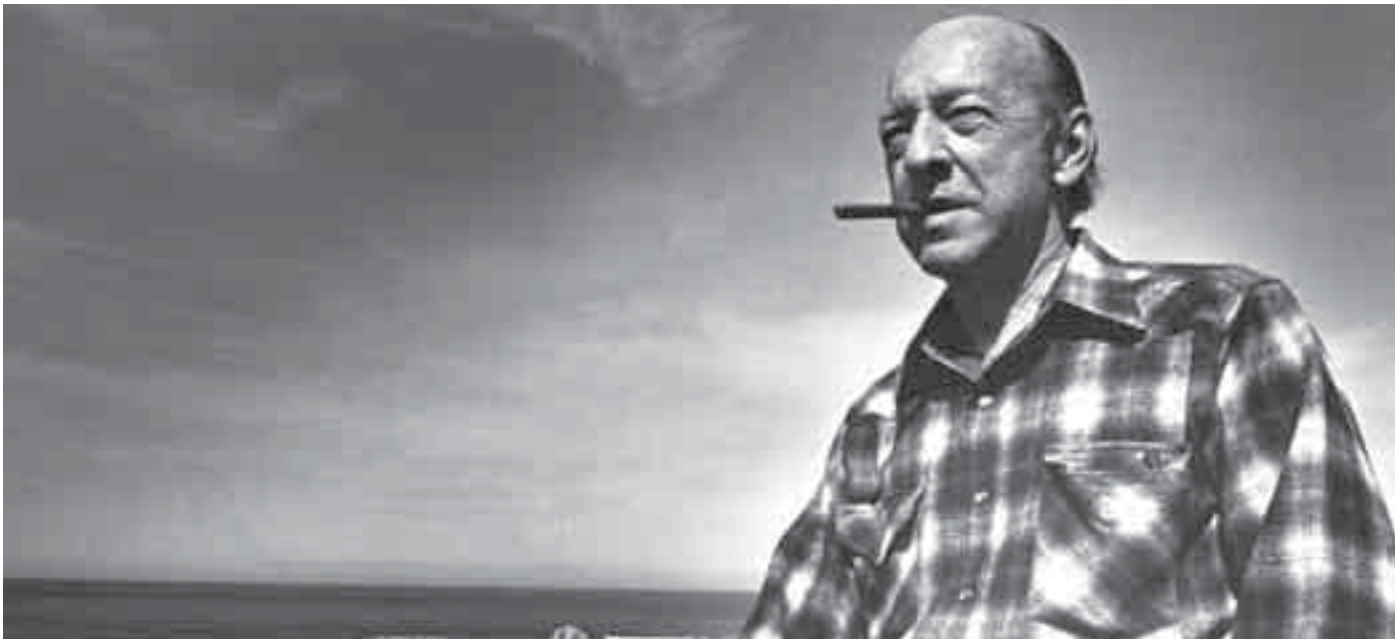

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William Appleman Williams near his home in Waldport, Oregon, circa 1986

Off Dead Center

by GREG GRANDIN

"Why William Appleman Williams, for God's sake?" asked Arthur Schlesinger Jr. in 1999 when he learned that Williams's *The Contours of American History* had been voted one of the 100 best nonfiction books of the twentieth century by the Modern Library. Schlesinger had spent the better part of half a century fighting the influence of Williams, describing him in 1954 as "pro-communist" to the president of the American Historical Association. In 1959 the *New York Times* picked Schlesinger's *The Coming of the New Deal* and Williams's *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* as best books of the year, calling the first, in a nod to a liberalism still vital, a "spirited study" and the second a "free-swinging attack" on US foreign policy, hinting at the raucous dissent to come. But forty years later, Schlesinger considered the fight won. The victory of the United States in the cold war had disproved Williams's jeremiads against an American empire careening toward disaster, while the concomitant collapse of the left had confirmed Schlesinger's position as curator of America's historical sensibility—liberal, democratic, pragmatic. Schlesinger was one of the Modern Library's jurors, and his own *The Age of Jackson* made the cut. Still, he couldn't keep Williams, dead for nearly a decade, out of the pantheon. For God's sake.

Williams was not the first historian to identify the United States as an empire, and much of his criticism of Eisenhower-era conformity echoed that of contemporaries like C. Wright Mills. Yet Williams was unique in linking domestic disquiet to a long history of expansion, which in his grandest formulations he traced back to England's Glorious Revolution, making him one of America's most consequential dissident intellectuals. He was ahead of many scholars in considering how the violence visited upon American Indians by Western expansion helped forge America's double-edged nationalism: espousing universalism, the Puritans wanted to subdue the "barbarians," Williams remarked in *The Nation* in 1959, while the Puritans' desire to be "left alone" could only be realized by "exterminating" them; the "American dream" for the country to become "a world unto itself" is not as "isolationist a policy as we have liked to think." "Gunfire removed the hardy," he wrote in *Empire as a Way of Life*, and displacement and disease extirpated the rest: "the coughs, the sneezes, and the laying on of hands were like the bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki." Williams's criticism of containment—Washington's post–World War II efforts to isolate the Soviet Union and limit the spread of Communism—got him labeled a moral relativist when in fact he was an ethical absolutist. What is good for us is a nonnegotiable good for them. "And if all that the rumors of catastrophe mean," he said on America's bicentennial, "is that the barbarians will land at Plymouth Rock, I can only say that I will give over in peace. They would move us off dead center."

By this, Williams meant breaking the cycle in which outward movement through territorial conquest, market expansion or war becomes the default solution to all social ills, and he spent most of his career trying to identify the problem that expansion deferred.

The Tragedy of American Diplomacy
By William Appleman Williams.
Foreword by Lloyd C. Gardner.
Afterword by Andrew J. Bacevich.
Norton. 326 pp. Paper $17.95.

Greg Grandin, a professor of history at New York University, is the author, most recently, of Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City *(Metropolitan).*

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At his most polemical and Freudian, tendencies that escalated in tandem with the Vietnam War, he argued that "Americans denied and sublimated their violence by projecting it upon those they defined as inferior." And he was acutely attuned to how "moralizing about the failures of other countries" could be an excellent career move. But in *Contours*, published in 1961, he reached into seventeenth-century British history to argue that the relationship between liberalism and empire was in effect a grand compromise, with expansion serving as a means of containing the factionalism generated by incipient capitalism. Empire, he wrote elsewhere, "was the only way to honor avarice and morality. The only way to be good *and* wealthy."

In America, the "presence of a continent defended only by weaker souls" made the merging of Puritan purpose with individualism "even more convenient"; the framers of the Constitution were acutely aware that private property generated interests too corrosive and passions too explosive for a circumscribed territory. James Madison was empire's great "theorist," who was "nothing if not comprehensive." Williams quoted a phrase of Madison's every chance he could: "Extend the sphere" and "you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens." Demands for a leveling of wealth could be defused by opening up "surplus social space." Thomas Jefferson once proposed redistributing property each generation as a way of retaining republican virtue in a small place, but he abandoned the idea to become, in Williams's words, the "epic poet" of the "urge to escape, to run away and spend one's life doing what one wanted—or in starting over again and again." In 1906 the German sociologist Werner Sombart had identified the pull of an open frontier as one explanation, among many, for why there was no socialism in America. And others in the 1950s, such as John Rawls and Louis Hartz, considered the problem of "property" in liberal thought, particularly as it related to the difficulty of achieving social democracy within a capitalist framework. Yet Williams was one of the first to link these questions explicitly to imperialism—or, more precisely, to realize the way expansion warps any consideration of the dilemma.

From 1957 to 1967, Williams taught in the history department at the University of Wisconsin, where he had received his doctorate. He had a considerable influence on the emerging New Left, drawing around him young bohemians and intellectuals compelled by watching him work out "an alternative radical critique to sterile Stalinism," as one of his teaching assistants, Herbert Gutman (himself a pioneer in US labor history), explained the attraction. Williams's many graduate students, including Walter LaFeber and Lloyd Gardner, dominated diplomatic history for decades. In the years after 9/11, however, his name was often invoked while his insights were routinely ignored, especially by liberals who sought to cast the Bush doctrine as an aberration, tracing its roots to the Israel lobby, Leo Strauss or perhaps Leon Trotsky. It took an ironic remark by a neocon historian to stress the perennial pertinence of Williams's ideas. "Can a generation raised on the teachings of William Appleman Williams and Walter LaFeber believe that the alleged sins of neoconservatism—excessive idealism, blinding self-righteousness, utopianism, hubris, militarism, and overweening ambition, and throw in if you want selfishness and greed—are somehow new sins?" asked Robert Kagan in 2008. As it happens, it was a question Williams had already answered. "We have been playing hide-and-seek for two centuries" in avoiding history, he wrote in *America Confronts a Revolutionary World* (1976), a game that has given us a "large playground" but has suspended us between past and future, "best epitomized in this motto: 'Limbo is our Way of Life.'"

William Appleman Williams was born in 1921 in the wheat and oat town of Atlantic, Iowa, founded after the Civil War and named, according to the historian, by a flip of a coin because it sat halfway between the two coasts. Williams credited his interest in politics and history to an underappreciated prairie cosmopolitanism (his mother and grandmothers were "liberated women"), one as open to the world's ideas as the local farmers were, via the Rock Island Railroad, to the continent's two great ocean markets. Educated at Missouri's Kemper Military Academy, he graduated from Annapolis and then served in the Pacific in World War II. At war's end, the Navy sent him to Corpus Christi, Texas, to train as a pilot. But in retaliation for his work with the NAACP—which, with the help of local Communists, was taking on General Motors, King Ranch and the local Catholic church—he was ordered back to the Pacific to take part in Operation Crossroads, an experiment that entailed the nuclear destruction of Bikini Atoll to test the effects of radiation on military personnel and equipment. A wartime back injury prevented his participation, sparing him the illnesses that afflicted many Crossroads

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alumni but leaving him in a shoulder-to-thigh cast for months. With little to do except read, he deepened his interest in history and philosophy. Shortly after he left Texas, an African-American activist was murdered. Williams often cited this and other instances of "routine violence" that met demands for equality, as well as his close-call escape from Crossroads, as contributing to his radicalization. "Yes, sir, that will make a socialist out of you," he once said to an interviewer, referring to the killing, "unless you are dead."

He began graduate school at Madison in 1947, the same year Wisconsin voters sent Joseph McCarthy to the Senate. McCarthyism, though, largely passed over Madison; the university's greater challenge was resisting liberal orthodoxy. Williams remembered later in his life that the campus was alive with a postwar class of "alert veterans" outspoken on issues like the Korean War, an engagement "largely forgotten in all the talk about the silent generation of the 1950s and the activism of the 1960s." Also vital to campus life was "thoughtful dialogue with first-rate conservatives"—not today's mean-spirited ids to liberal superegos but scholars who honestly grappled with American history.

Above all, Madison was a stew of ideas, with émigrés from Europe and refugees from New York drawing on European social and cultural theory to reinvigorate older Progressive Era historiography. The German sociologist Hans Gerth introduced Williams to Continental philosophy and Frankfurt School Marxism, which sent him "soaring," according to Paul Buhle and Edward Rice-Maximin in their excellent intellectual biography *William Appleman Williams: The Tragedy of Empire*. The Americanists brought him "back down to earth." At some point, Williams felt compelled to decide between thinkers who saw the world as a dynamic whole, such as Hegel, Marx and Spinoza, and those who viewed it as made up of "atomistic elements" only mechanically related. "I chose Spinoza," he said. He also chose Marx, "exhilarated" by his "capacity to see in one piece of evidence a set of relationships that reveal an economic truth, a truth about an idea, a social verity, and a political truth." He focused on diplomacy because "if there is a Spinozian whole for an historian, then it has to involve foreign policy and the periodization of history."

This self-description makes Williams sound more like a Hegelian than a Spinozian or a Marxist. Indeed, despite his searing indictment of empire, he was openly obsessed with the idea of America as the embodiment of a world spirit. "America," he wrote toward the end of his life, "is the kind of culture that wakes you in the night, the kind of nightmare that may [yet] possibly lead us closer to the truth." Williams was a serious, empirical scholar whose prose could be as dense as any academic's, but he often broke out of form to riff in a style as sprawling as his subject matter. "If we start with reform and go on to modernize, prosperity, improve, uplift," he said of the action words of American expansion, "then we come out with purify, put right, purgation, overtake, and never look back. Finally, we find stewards as policemen, which leads us backward and forwards to benevolence, surveillance, reform, paternalism, and systematic discipline in the name of progress." Intoxicated by the "dialectical tension" of "coming apart at the seams at midnight" and "stitching it back together in a sentence or two at 3 a.m.," Williams, a jazz drummer, increasingly expressed himself with bop rhythm and beat imagery. "Assume the worst," he warned in his last great work, chanting its title with a frequency worthy of *Howl*'s Moloch: "empire as a way of life will lead to nuclear death."

But Williams also got in close. For all his talk about grand historical narratives, he rendered his subjects with an intimacy beyond the reach of most historians, of whatever political persuasion. Gen. Douglas MacArthur "had an instinct for the viscera," and his lunge for power stemmed as much from the dynamics of the military-industrial complex as from the frustrations of his Scottish aristocratic family's three-generation bid to break into American politics. "One has to touch one's cap," Williams said, to any "man sitting on that combination of personal and social dynamite, and somehow keeping it under control." Then there's "Ol' Lyndon" Johnson, "first and always" a "*southern* white who grew up wandering hither and yon across that no man's land that divides the lowers from the maybe middles," his Confederate "consciousness of being first among the damned" making him aware of the New Deal's betrayal of African-Americans in ways Northern patricians like John F. Kennedy never could understand. One has the feeling Williams knew these people, or men very much like them, during his service in the Pacific and his time in Corpus Christi.

Well before the publication of *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*—Williams's best-known book, it has been reissued this year on its fiftieth anniversary—tragedy had become a favored genre of scholars operating within the "vital center" of American intel-

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lectual life. "History is not a redeemer, promising to solve all human problems in time," Arthur Schlesinger cautioned in 1949 in a *Partisan Review* essay nominally about the Civil War but really a brief for containment; it is rather a "tragedy in which we are all involved, whose keynote is anxiety and frustration." Other "tough-minded" liberal intellectuals, such as Richard Hofstadter and Reinhold Niebuhr, invoked the force of instinct and passion in mass society as something of a *deus ex machina* to stress history's tragic dimensions. The notion that evil did not "proceed from a cruel system"—that is, a system that could be engineered to produce ever more virtue—but from man's "dark and tangled aspects," as Schlesinger interpreted Niebuhr, helped transform liberalism from a politics of hope to one of fear. The policy implications were clear: the New Deal was the outer limit of reform, beyond which lay the nether lands of totalitarianism, and the Soviets needed to be confronted with the same resolve with which the Union defeated the Confederacy and Franklin Delano Roosevelt beat the Nazis.

Williams viewed this dramaturgical turn as a manifestation of America's "New Babbittry," a middlebrow provincialism that, despite gestures to liberal internationalism, garrisoned American thought from the rest of the world—as well as from its own past. In the mid-1950s, Williams was recruited to write for *The Nation* by editor Carey McWilliams, himself recently brought from the West to revive the magazine, politically and financially besieged for taking an anti–anti-Communist stance during the editorship of Freda Kirchwey. Both men favored a show-me skepticism in their dealings with East Coast intellectuals. But Williams, trained in European criticism and well read in Freud, was particularly unimpressed by the moral theatrics of their work and unconvinced by their justifying pretensions. "There is a great book to be written some day," he quipped, that could explain how historians like Schlesinger who blamed the cold war on Stalin's paranoia "came by the power to render such flat-out psychiatric judgments without professional training." At *The Nation*, McWilliams used the historian to lend "depth" to front-of-the-book reporting, giving him free rein to develop a prescient critique of still-unnamed neoconservatism. In a 1956 review/essay, Williams identified Hofstadter's celebrated *The Age of Reform*—with its heavy use of psychology to explain violent episodes in American history, including the Spanish-American War—as signaling a turning point in American thought. Absolved from having to examine the relationship between ideology and interests, liberals had rendered history into "myth." "Perhaps the major American casualty of the cold war," he wrote in another essay, "has been the idea of history."

But if the "New Babbitts" wanted history as dinner theater, Williams could do that too. In 1955 Williams produced a *Nation* "fable," casting the cold warrior as a composite of four historical types: Puritan, Planter, Hamiltonian and Homesteader:

> The Puritan elected himself America's first elite. He originally intended to establish a righteous Eden. His handmaiden was to have been Calvin's Virgin of unexploited wealth. But the Devil, cleverly camouflaged as the noble savage, already claimed the Virgin. Thus the Puritan had first to contain and defeat the red man.... But the pietistic intensity of his awareness of the Devil withered the Puritan's sense of purpose. Morality ceased to be the means of communicating with God and the guide to the good life.... Only the Devil, warned the Puritan, spoke of the general welfare. Thus the Puritan gave way to the Planter, who comforted and wooed the Virgin.... Not until the Puritan pointed to the evil of the slave did the Planter and the Virgin take up the language of noblesse oblige. It was then too late. The hell of a fellow who occasionally feeds the neighborhood does not become m'Lord through rhetoric....

And on it goes, with Williams introducing the Hamiltonian empire builder, who vanquished the Planter, and the Homesteader, a potential repository of a nonimperial America but compromised by his ties to the Hamiltonian and the Planter. At this point Williams was an assistant professor at the University of Oregon, a land-grant university tucked into a remote corner of the continental United States. Yet here he was, precociously seizing on the then-influential "myth and symbol" school of American studies to sweepingly reinterpret all of US history. He perversely cast FDR not as a Hamiltonian but as a Planter who renovated noblesse oblige for the industrial age and reconciled the Homesteader (Henry Wallace!) to the "machine." Williams made the story's endpoint 1955, hoping that Soviet nuclear power would rescue history from the "Puritan memory hole" and free Eisenhower from crusaders who mistook "catechism for wisdom." The tale helps decode his subsequent

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writings, in particular his recurrent concern with the externalization of morality: "good" came to be understood as expansion ("Calvin's Virgin"), whereas anything that stood in its way—from American Indians to the Confederacy, from the Soviet Union to the Third World—was "evil." "Americans became very prone to define their rivals as unnatural men," he wrote, "almost, if not wholly, beyond redemption."

Three years later, Williams published *Tragedy*, taking Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier thesis"—which held that the westward advance of the United States determined the unique character of American society—and standing it on its head. Since the end of the nineteenth century, Turner's ideas, Williams wrote in an earlier essay, "rolled through the universities and into popular literature as a tidal wave." But most historians had misconstrued their importance, debating whether or not the frontier had closed when Turner said it did, in the 1890s, or if a continent of "free land" actually led to political or social democracy. The very term "frontier," he argued, emphasized the "static" over the "dynamic," distracting scholars from viewing the thesis as a "classic illustration of the transformation of an idea into an ideology," the influence of which extended into the twentieth century. The real task, Williams said, was to understand how Turner served as a guide to policy-makers, including presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, who saw the American border not as a line to stop at but as one to cross.

Tragedy traced the nascence of America's modern, nonterritorial empire to the industrial crisis of the 1890s, which brought violence and strife and threatened much worse. There emerged in reaction a "convergence of economic practice with intellectual analysis and emotional involvement" that created a "very powerful and dangerous propensity to define the essentials of American welfare in terms of activities outside the United States." With profits falling, cities swelling, workers marching and agrarians protesting, the United States, far from being "thrown back upon itself," as Turner described the result of reaching the Pacific, cast further afield. Militarists might have been dreaming of national regeneration, farmers and industrialists of international markets, labor leaders of social peace and a piece of the pie, intellectuals of an outlet for individualism in a world of corporate concentration, and missionaries of deliverance, but all came to share a vision in which domestic progress and prosperity were dependent on unfettered expansion.

The result was the Spanish-American War, when the United States got Cuba and Puerto Rico, along with what Williams thought the real prize: the Philippines, a foothold in the Pacific needed to pre-empt Europe's and Japan's drive to divvy up China. The acquisition of overseas territory—as opposed to the fruits of mainland Manifest Destiny—provoked a great national debate between imperialists and anti-imperialists. This debate was ultimately reconciled by a third camp, which advocated an "Open Door" of market expansion; this would allow the United States to use its ascendant economic strength to best competitors while remaining free from the burdens of direct colonialism.

After the crisis of the 1890s, domestic prosperity came to hinge on unfettered expansion.

The Open Door promised perpetual peace. "In a truly perceptive and even noble sense," Williams wrote, its designers "understood that war represented the failure of policy." Yet the policy delivered constant conflict. The grail was the Chinese market. But rivals like Japan, czarist Russia and Germany kept getting in the way, embroiling the United States in its own Great Game of geopolitics and war. Rather than discrediting the Open Door, opposition heightened the magnetism of the idea, uniting realists and idealists and pulling anti-imperialists into intervention. Fully committed to opening Chinese markets yet faced with a bloody insurgency in the US-occupied Philippines, a fierce critic of annexation like William Jennings Bryan argued that Washington should establish a protectorate on the islands until stability was achieved, just as "we have protected the republics of Central and South America."

Williams presented the Open Door as a variant of the dependent relationship between liberalism and empire, deferring yet again the problems of property. At the same time, the myth perpetuated by expansion—that a "harmony of interests" could be secured under crisis-prone industrial capitalism—was projected outward, obscuring the consequences of expansion. Neither revolutions in Mexico, China and Russia nor insurgencies against Marine occupations in the Philippines and the Caribbean were dealt with as effects of economic restructuring or US militarism. Rather, missionary certainty blended with the ideal of self-determination into an all-encompassing "imperial anticolonialism," allowing Americans to believe that self-interest and the world's well-being were mutually reliant. It was, Williams wrote, "as neat a circle as ever drawn freehand." *Tragedy* locates the origins of containment in Washington's overreaction to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution; later works would trace the policy back to the French and Haitian revolutions, both of which spawned an "idealism that was so broad as to question the uniqueness and mission of America."

Thus hard-wired into the *Weltanschauung*—a "conception of the world and how it works, and a strategy for acting upon that outlook on a routine basis as well as in times of crisis"—that drives the United States forward were the terms of its own denial, a point unintentionally affirmed by Adolf Berle, a brain-truster of FDR's presidency. Berle favorably reviewed *Tragedy* in the *New York Times*, thinking it a corrective to the excesses of the early cold war. Yet he quibbled with Williams's use of the word "imperialism"; the United States in the nineteenth century, he said, "did expand, but into empty land. It is one thing to conquer a subject people; another to occupy vacant real estate."

Tragedy appeared in stores a month after the Cuban Revolution, with deteriorating relations between Washington and Havana providing daily illustrations of many of its arguments. "A more saddening example," Williams remarked in a revised edition, "of reading world history since 1917 in terms of the Bolshevik Revolution would be very difficult to find." The ongoing influence of Frederick Jackson Turner was practically certified by Kennedy, who responded to Cuba and other Third World problems by declaring that "America's frontiers today are on every continent." Kennedy's 1961 Alliance for Progress (which Berle was instrumental in organizing) read like a screenplay based on *Tragedy*, with the United States in the dual role of preacher and constable, promoting both modernization and counterinsurgency to tragic ends in one country after another. And history continued to be kind to *Tragedy*'s arguments. "After all," said Williams in 1973, in response to his critics, "Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Chile did happen." So did, in his lifetime, Iran, Guatemala, Indonesia, Brazil, Laos, Argentina, Angola, Mozambique, El Salvador, Nicaragua and

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Afghanistan. Yet through it all he would continue to discern the same pattern of denial. "The essence of American foreign relations is so obvious as to have been often ignored or evaded," Williams wrote in 1972; the "American Empire just grew like Topsy."

Williams most likely would have considered Andrew Bacevich, who contributes an afterword to the anniversary edition of *Tragedy*, a "first-rate conservative," someone to argue with over the wisdom of containment. Bacevich graduated from West Point in 1969 and served in Vietnam the following year, and when he began to study international relations at Princeton, he considered the New Left historian his "personal nemesis." But he eventually came to appreciate Williams's analysis as resonating with his own postwar realism and based his *American Empire* (2002) largely on the Open Door thesis, arguing for the essential continuity of US foreign policy—driven by the quest for foreign markets and a belief that domestic well-being was predicated on expansion—from Woodrow Wilson to Bill Clinton. He still thought, however, that Williams's view of the cold war was "wrong" for downplaying the Soviet Union's massive "abuse of human rights." Lately, Bacevich has focused on how some of the actions taken in the name of anti-Communism helped gestate neocon utopianism, yet he still proposes deployment of a restricted version of containment, stripped of its pastoral urges, against Islamic extremism. When asked what book he would recommend to Barack Obama, Bacevich picked not *Tragedy* but Niebuhr's *The Irony of American History* (1952), calling it a corrective to the Bush doctrine's delusion that history could be "coerced toward some predetermined destination." Wise diplomacy, Niebuhr wrote, embraces a "modest awareness of the limits of our own knowledge and power."

Niebuhr's conversion of the Christian concept of humility before God into a foreign policy ethics, however, cut two ways, upholding realism while justifying its own form of idealism. Niebuhr was an anti-imperialist in his youth, yet *Irony* served as something of a blank postdated check, underwriting intervention and liquidating its deficits. His interpretation of history as a series of "ironies" folded the violence involved in the rise of the United States—which Niebuhr and Williams described in strikingly similar terms—into a transcendent understanding of evil and, conveniently enough, projected onto the Soviet Union. In 1946, for instance, Niebuhr had called the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki "morally indefensible." Six years later, *Irony*'s first page warned that there is an "element of tragedy" in the struggle of "freedom against tyranny." Though "our civilization" is "confident of its virtue it must yet hold atomic bombs ready for use so as to prevent a possible world conflagration."

Williams thought this a theology of evasion. It was easy to lampoon what he described as the "high noon" fantasies of Henry Luce's American Century. Yet hand-wringers like Niebuhr—whom Williams called the "most sought-after soul sitter for American liberalism"—played their part in justifying expansion. Williams had no illusions about the Soviet Union; he criticized its repression of intellectuals. Russians, he said, paid a "terrible price in terror and hardship." But he too could appreciate what he called history's "harsh irony": by bringing a preponderance of power to bear against the USSR, which emerged from World War II with an exhausted military, wasted farms and factories, ruined cities and a "sad, weary, and lethargic population," the United States eventually conjured up the enemy it feared; armed with the threat of containment, Stalin drove "the Soviet people to the brink of collapse" until he turned his country into a nuclear power. Williams identified in the debates about how to respond to a revived USSR the same merry-go-round logic that emerged after 1898. "Containment-liberation" was "two sides of the same coin": idealism gets us in; realism keeps us there while promising to get us out.

Bacevich values Williams as an interpreter of America's *Weltanschauung* yet believes his contributions to global history "do not stand the test of time," since he underestimated the ability of the United States to regroup after Vietnam and overestimated the importance of Third World revolutions. It is true that Williams was at his weakest when, forgetting his criticisms of Hofstadter, he attributed psychological mass support to imperialism. For the most part, he thought change would come not from within the system—"where is Du Bois?" C.L.R. James asked after finishing *Contours*—but from expansion hitting a wall, which Williams kept thinking was imminent. The "General Theory of Relativity is likely to antiquate the frontier thesis," he wrote in 1955; Turner had "met his match in Einstein and Oppenheimer." In the 1960s, Vietnam, along with the revolt of the Third World, had "set the outer limits of the American Empire." And in the 1970s, the arms race

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and energy crisis brought the empire to bay. Yet each time Williams was proven wrong, his larger argument was confirmed. Third World revolutions didn't succeed on their own terms, but they did propel US history: Eisenhower begot Kennedy, who turned to counterinsurgency to bypass the nuclear impasse; Jimmy Carter begot Ronald Reagan, who responded to the melancholy 1970s by remoralizing and remilitarizing diplomacy, opening the Third World to hasten the shift from industrial to financial capitalism; Bill Clinton abandoned the New Deal's noblesse oblige to go global, equating America's interests with the world's, at which point George W. Bush enters stage right. If we start with Niebuhr, who eventually found the irony of Vietnam too much to bear, we have to somersault over this history to explain the past seven years. With Williams, the present flows from the past.

Williams's real anguish was the degeneration of astute self-awareness into ideology.

Williams did not believe, as did many progressives of his day, that liberalism was a way station on the road to social democracy; he thought that whatever transformative force the philosophy once held had mutated either into a corrosive, anti-intellectual individualism or a justification for monopoly capitalism, in both cases kept alive only by a constant "fleeing forward." Thus he was free to find traces of a latent socialism in the unlikeliest places, including in the South's culture of defeat and resentment (a "prism-prison" that distorts some truths, leading to racial supremacy and "hawkish bellicosity," but that clarifies a healthy distrust of the state) and in the writings of aristocrats, conservative politicians and businessmen who, even if they still defended hierarchy, candidly confronted the predicaments of capital. His most famous restoration project was Herbert Hoover; it seemed that every time Schlesinger wrote a book about FDR, Williams would counter by finding some new, underappreciated quality in the man New Dealers loved to ridicule.

But his true inspiration was the "courageous and deeply intelligent" civil rights movement, which rejected the "white man's theory of escape through the frontier" to work on "the here and now." Just as Williams could tease out the expansionist assumptions in the smallest asides, he found glimmers of a true American socialism in understated opposition to the evangelical impulse: "I'm not concerned with the New Jerusalem," he quoted Martin Luther King Jr. "I'm concerned with the New Atlanta, the New Birmingham, the New Montgomery."

Having been chastened by so many wrong predictions about the end of empire, Williams, if he were around, might think the United States capable of slipping the knot of the current crisis to set out beyond the borders of its territory and markets yet again. But he would certainly appreciate the irony that China, long imagined as the ultimate frontier, the great absorber of American surplus, now keeps the United States afloat to serve as its capital and commodity market. Frederick Jackson Turner survived the bomb, Vietnam and the 1970s. But he has possibly met his match in Wen Jiabao, China's premier, who in March reminded the United States about its trillion-dollar debt to Beijing and criticized its "unsustainable model of development characterized by prolonged low savings and high consumption."

Williams would likely empathize with Barack Obama, the way he did with LBJ, as someone charged with cleaning up the mess others made, "striving to do all that was possible within the orthodoxy he had been taught." But he would be suspicious of the president's endorsement of Niebuhr. In 2007 Obama impressed *New York Times* columnist David Brooks by saying he shared the theologian's view of history as tragic and ironic and the belief that there's "serious evil in the world"—though Williams might recognize it as a shrewd bid to win over our current crop of soul sitters. He might also understand Obama's embrace of the rhetoric of exceptionalism as an attempt to bridle that vanity and shift attention—as much as interests, ideology and the twenty-four-hour news cycle permit—to building a New America, one that finally kicks the habit of externalizing evil and jumping the perimeter.

He would, however, think dangerous the conceit that domestic and foreign policy could be hoodwinked into going their separate ways. Kennedy tried that, Williams once wrote, but saber-rattling to appease militarists made him a "hostage of the right." We need to "reconceptualize this war as existing in the mental space of the Pashtun nation," says counterinsurgent theorist John Nagl of the conflict along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Williams would know that the war already exists in the American mental space: in the denial of Washington's role in nurturing Islamic extremism; in the reliance on bomber drones to wage low-cost war; and in Obama's refusal to completely forsake rendition and other Bush-era extrajudicial innovations. Here, Williams might say, is "a fact that contains the whole, and a whole that contains every fact" of a legal system incapable of absorbing the excesses of expansion and war, as well as the deference that imperial power commands.

Ultimately, he would worry that Obama, as he believed FDR did before him, is responding to the current crisis by shoring up the settlement that ended the previous one (in this case, the contraction of the 1970s)—by recycling the policy-makers (like Iran/Contra luminary Robert Gates and derivative-enabler Lawrence Summers) responsible for the overleveraging of American power. But "empire as a way of life" is forgiving of mistakes, as Williams might say, provided they are made on behalf of that life.

A lazy reading of Williams has him decamping back to Oregon at the end of the 1960s after a decade teaching at Madison, disillusioned with New Left radicalism and increasingly strident in his predictions. Yet Williams's real anguish did not concern the left—he liked to tweak its conceits yet remained to his last days forgiving of its excesses—but with what might be called the atrophy of the *Weltanschauung*, as reflected in the degeneration of astute self-awareness into hardened ideology. For all their differences, Adolf Berle and Arthur Schlesinger were of Williams's world, and to a large degree their intelligence was honed by answering dissent. Schlesinger tried to dismiss Williams, but he was compelled to spend many long years arguing with him. Berle even invited him to join the Kennedy administration as a foreign policy adviser (Williams declined). Today, policy-makers and their intellectuals talk exclusively among themselves, thinking themselves accountable only to the distant opinions of "history." Recently asked to comment on her role in the invasion and occupation of Iraq, Condoleezza Rice responded by saying that she had been reading Dean Acheson's *Present at the Creation*, which taught her that "you have to keep moving forward, recognizing that it will be a long time before history adjudicates one way or another on outcomes."

Until Judgment Day comes, we have to settle for Clio's answer to a more modest inquiry: why William Appleman Williams? Because as history has shown since the publication of *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, things can always get worse. ■

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BACK TALK

ADRIAN BELLESGUARD

Adam Phillips and Barbara Taylor

Historian Barbara Taylor was frustrated with articles touting the benefits of kindness as if it was a new fad. Her friend psychoanalyst Adam Phillips had noticed his patients' preoccupations with their own kindness, or lack thereof. The two decided to write collaboratively on the subject, and the result is *On Kindness* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux; $20). They argue that "magical kindness," the sentimental notion of a bloodless remedy for social problems and rocky relationships, has obscured true kindness—the recognition that we are all vulnerable, interdependent beings who find in sympathy and fellow feeling some of our greatest pleasure. *—Christine Smallwood*

In the book you speak of "the kindness instinct." What is it?

Adam Phillips: One of our fundamental predispositions is to care for other people. "The kindness instinct" is an attempt to formulate a phrase that could capture the way in which kindness might be as elemental as sex. There would be, as it were, profound biological reasons having to do with survival and reproduction that would mean it was intrinsic in our nature to be capable of kindness.

Barbara Taylor: The development of the personality of the individual occurs in relation to other people. There's really no such thing as a psychological isolate, or if there is, they really don't prosper or possibly even become fully human at all. Right from the start, who we are and what we are is embedded in our relating to other people.

Why are people suspicious of kindness?

Taylor: Since antiquity people have argued about whether or not human beings are kind or egotistical. But what seemed striking to us was that in modern times, there's a sense that one side of that argument has swept the board, and one might call it the Hobbesian point of view. We're not saying that people have stopped being kind but that kindness has been under a great deal of pressure. What is striking is that people have stopped thinking of human beings as kind. There's a real suspicion about the human character which has never been, in Western society, as widespread as it is now.

Phillips: Kindness is a casualty of a certain kind of capitalist, competitive culture. It's quite clear that if you regard other people as an object for exploitation then kindness is a major problem.

Why draw on biology by using the word "instinct"?

Phillips: We don't need to speak biologically. But it seems to make sense that kindness would be part of the survival of the species. If you accept that one of the most fundamental things about all of us is our vulnerability, then it isn't odd that we would have to find ways of adapting to this. One of the ways we adapt is to deny or attack something. A better way is to acknowledge it and live with it, as though it is the medium between us rather than a problem.

Taylor: We are each other's best resource and also our sole resource. The term "instinct" is being used, loosely, to refer to psychic survival.

What's different about women's relationship to kindness?

Taylor: From the mid-eighteenth century onward, kindness becomes increasingly seen as a female prerogative. That clearly has to do with changes in the position of women vis-à-vis the working life and marketplace, and the idea that women's exclusion from bourgeois economic relations was in some sense a prerequisite of happy family life. Emotions like kindness began to devolve onto women and became associated with ideas of self-sacrifice. Today, that notion has caused great difficulties for women because there is a massive collision between what's required of women who become professional, especially in the world of business, and the pressures around parenting. For a woman, moving between home and work can be a schizoid experience. There's a larger question, which is whether some sexual differences figure in the development of personality. Are there reasons why women might find responsiveness to other people perhaps easier than men?

How is kindness related to hate?

Phillips: Insofar as we assume that there is an absolute split between hating and being kind, it's as though we create an impossible internal regime. What Barbara and I are assuming is that it's as natural to hate as it is to love. Anybody you need and love will frustrate you, and you will hate them. There's always going to be ambivalence. A sentimentalized version of kindness is associated only with love and is bloodless. The kind of kindness we're interested in is about engaging with other people and not managing them. It's not that hatred is the opposite of kindness, it's that kindness must include some aggression and some fundamental ambivalence. You'll never get pure kindness.

Taylor: As long as there's a capacity for identification between human beings, then there will be a mixture of all sorts of feelings between people: sympathy, hostility, aggression, kindness. The real trouble starts when identification between two people breaks down completely.

What do you want people to get out of the book?

Phillips: I'd be very happy if it was read as a self-help book. What we want to do is remind people of kindness and put it back on the table, so that it might be a genuine pleasure rather than a duty or willed act. Given that we are much happier when we are kinder, why is there not enough kindness around? And it's not a question of trying harder—it's a genuine pleasure. There's a genuine desire to be kind. We're not kind out of the fear of punishment. We actually want to be kind. I would want people to be allowed to be as kind as they feel themselves to be and to wonder what's happened to kindness. ■

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Hubbub and Stillness

by BARRY SCHWABSKY

Biennials are the exhibitions all art lovers love to hate, and the Venice Biennale (through November 22) is the one we wouldn't miss for the world. The reason? Take your pick of clichés: *Timing is everything*; but don't forget *location, location, location*. Born in 1895, the Biennale was the first of the great recurrent international exhibitions, but even if the Carnegie Museum of Art had been a bit quicker in kicking off the first edition (1896) of what is now the Carnegie International, it's hard to imagine the prospect of another trip to Pittsburgh setting the aesthete's heart aflutter quite like that of a visit to La Serenissima. Venice is preeminently the city of art, meaning not just that it houses a great many works of the highest order—like many other cities, including its old rival, Florence—but that the city as a whole is a superlative embodiment of art. Precisely because the art of our time is so deeply marked by an anti-aesthetic spirit, a suspicion of every quality that has already been certified as a guarantee of artistic value, seeing contemporary art in Venice—this "jeweled bathtub for cosmopolitan courtesans, *cloaca maxima* of passéism," as it was denounced by Marinetti in 1910—is a perfect way of testing its ability to go against its own grain. As the Biennale's tentacles spread ever more thoroughly into every part of Venice, we begin to experience contemporary art as a city in itself, overlaid on the existing one with which it is deeply in tension, as in some lost fable by Calvino.

Then what's the problem? Clearly, the form of the mega-exhibition. The complaints are legion, and all in their way justified. The exhibitions have become too big, too crowded, too hectic; instead of qualitatively sifting the masses of art being produced, they simply follow a more or less arbitrary selection schema and toss the results back at the public to sort through. For many, the ne plus ultra of this tendency was Documenta 11 in Kassel, Germany, in 2002, curated by Okwui Enwezor. Thanks to its emphasis on video, the "650,000 visitors [who] came to appraise around 450 artworks on a surface area of 13,000 square metres" (according to the Documenta website) often left wondering if they could have sat through all that footage even if they'd stayed the whole hundred days of the exhibition. Of course, these complaints have been common since before the big exhibitions became as big as they are now, and well before the advent of "time-based art" (or, as I am tempted to rename it, time-consuming art).

Venice differs from most other such extravaganzas not so much in scale as in being a multitude of more or less self-contained parts that can be considered independently of the others, and some of which are more central than others. The central parts are found in the Giardini della Biennale, where the exhibition has been taking place since its inception, and in the nearby Arsenale. The Giardini houses thirty pavilions, twenty-eight of them belonging to the nations whose participation has been longest established—primarily European, as one might imagine, along with the United States and Canada, but also including several Latin American countries plus Japan, Korea and Egypt. Each country chooses its own exhibition program, usually a one-person show of a prominent artist or a small group exhibition. The twenty-ninth is the Venice Pavilion, while the thirtieth and largest of the pavilions, once called the Italian Pavilion, is now devoted to a large, curated international group show, in recognition of which its name has been changed this year to Palazzo delle Esposizioni. (In exchange, Italy has been given its own pavilion at the Arsenale; a shaky start has been made of it, with a group presentation that completely ignores the Italian artists who are actually making any impact internationally.) This group show is the component of the Biennale that is comparable, but on a global rather than a national scale, to exhibitions like the Whitney Biennial. But in Venice it is only one piece of the puzzle. As this curated part of the Biennale has grown more important, it has been given more space. In recent years it has been expanded beyond the original pavilion and taken over the Corderie of the Arsenale, a long, almost tunnel-like building about a fifteen-minute walk from the Giardini, in which the ropes for the Venetian navy were once made. This year the curator is the Swedish-born, Germany-based critic Daniel Birnbaum. Upholding the tradition of giving the shows vague but grand-sounding titles that have the aroma of a theme without actually committing the curator to including or leaving out anything in particular, his exhibition is called "Fare Mondi" (Making Worlds).

The reach of contemporary art has grown enormously of late. Nearly every country wants a pavilion in Venice, but with the Giardini having been filled to capacity the newer arrivals have to find temporary accommodation elsewhere. There are plenty of stray *palazzi* for rent around the lagoon, so this year there were more than sixty national pavilions, with the off-site presentations showcasing work from nations ranging in scale from the Republic of San Marino to the People's Republic of China. The national presentations beyond the Giardini represent the Biennale's second circle: they are scattered and sometimes hard to find; most visitors make their way only to a few of them. A third circle consists of "collateral events"—exhibitions (forty-four this year) organized independently of the Biennale but recognized by it and included in its catalog. Finally, at the greatest distance from the center are a multitude of events timed to coincide with the Biennale but without any official link to it. As far as the curated exhibition goes, the tendency toward gargantuanism probably reached its peak six years ago, when Francesco Bonami's "Dreams and Conflicts: The Dictatorship of the Viewer" was merely an umbrella for no fewer than eleven subexhibitions, most of them subcontracted out to other curators (Bonami curated just two sections and co-curated a third with Birnbaum). One section alone, "Utopia Station," curated by Molly Nesbit, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Rirkrit Tiravanija, included more than 200 artists and collectives in an outdoor setting that felt like a high school Earth Day fair, all earnestness and good intentions, however ineffectual. By contrast, "Fare Mondi" includes the work of only about ninety artists.

Even allowing for a curated portion that has been much scaled back since 2003, one could not see the entirety of the Biennale without devoting a couple of weeks to the task. Whether anyone ever actually does so, I doubt. To say this is not merely to make a point about the practicalities of the visit. Because each country chooses the art in its pavilion internally, the differences among them amount to a practical demonstration of the multiplicity of perspectives in the burgeoning international art world. This doesn't mean, of course, that a given country represents a particular perspective on art, or that there is a particular international perspective—art is contentious everywhere, but the ideas under contention vary sufficiently that even well-informed viewers are liable to misunderstand (and to dismiss as naïve and outdated, or as slick and facile) work that emerges from unfamiliar contexts. From

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Barry Schwabsky, an American art critic and poet living in London, has recently published Book Left Open in the Rain *(Black Square Editions/The Brooklyn Rail).*

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within the contemporary international art world, one can have the impression that everything is converging into a sort of aesthetic *pensée unique*. But to wander among the national pavilions in Venice is to be forcibly reminded that if such a convergence is occurring, it is happening very unevenly. While many of the smaller countries make every effort to present up-to-date forms of installation art, video and whatnot, others choose to ignore these forms altogether. As an example, Ahmed Askalany's stylized figurative sculptures made of woven palm leaves—Askalany is one of two artists in the Egyptian pavilion this year—would probably have been considered too close to handicrafts to feature in the pavilion of any Western nation, let alone in the curated show. And yet for all their propensity toward a too-generalized humanist sentiment, his sculptures are artistically stronger than most of the contemporary-seeming work in other pavilions.

For the British critic Lawrence Alloway, writing in 1968, the capaciousness of the Venice Biennale already showed that the quantity of works and artists and possible styles meant that it was no longer possible to hope to arrive at the "uniform validated standards" to which art critics once aspired; forty years later, given the Biennale's exponential growth, that is even more the case. And yet, paradoxically, that same growth has made it easier to ignore the consequences that Alloway saw clearly. Then, when the Biennale took place only within the confines of the Giardini, each visitor was likely to enter every pavilion and was sure to come upon something that challenged his or her aesthetic assumptions—whether by being too radical, too conservative or simply too unexpected. Today, when the viewer must pick and choose what to see because the whole is too big to take in, one is more likely to see just those presentations featuring art one already knows or at least knows enough to be curious about. And of course, the more of an art world insider you are, the more likely this is to be the case. One goes to the Biennale in order to encounter something new, to have one's assumptions challenged, but the very scale of it makes that ever less likely.

Another paradox: as Alloway acknowledged, far from flattening and standardizing responses, the diversification and multiplication of artists, works and experiences means that "first-person awareness is more singular than ever, as art is encountered in changing contexts." For Birnbaum, the same idea holds for the curator: "The chaos on my table," he writes, "is probably as close as one gets to a master plan for this exhibition." The very first sentence in his catalog essay, for that matter, is a single word standing there like a totem: "Bricolage." It's a simple, everyday French word that means something like "DIY" or "patching up," but it has enjoyed enormous intellectual success since Claude Lévi-Strauss employed it in *The Savage Mind*, in 1962, to describe the way mythic thinking is constructed, not systematically but through tinkering with preexisting ideas from various sources, bending and hammering them into shape, as it were, to make them fit together. Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze are just two of the thinkers who took up the term and widened its application, but few artists have needed any theoretical justification for recognizing something of their own practice in the term.

SIPA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

An installation by Italian artist Fabrizio Plessi at the 2009 Venice Biennale

Birnbaum's choice of artists, and above all his installation of their work, demonstrates an appealing empathy for all that is intelligently fluid and spontaneous in the contemporary art mainstream. This is especially notable at the Corderie, which has always seemed a deeply unsympathetic venue because of its long, narrow structure. Walking through the exhibitions here has felt a bit like strolling through a pedestrian shopping street, glancing at the wares to one's right and left. There was never any sense of flow between one artist's work and the next. But by reducing the number of artists, Birnbaum has not only been able to grant them more space; he has managed to carve out spaces of different dimensions, more intimate or more expansive as their art demands, and in such a way as to create a path for the viewer that feels not strictly rectilinear but serpentine and organic. And while the art that Birnbaum has chosen is quite various—within the limits of what is currently presentable as sophisticated contemporary art—the predominant aesthetic recalls that of the New Museum's 2007–08 exhibition "Unmonumental," which favored assemblage-based work that is (as the New Museum curators put it) "materially provisional and structurally precarious." In the Corderie, painting, photography and even self-contained sculpture are not entirely absent, but they are overshadowed by makeshift arrangements of objects and images. Grids and straight lines are out; scatter and unpredictability are in. At the New Museum, the choice of works and their installation in its cramped confines had the unfortunate effect of undermining one's sense of the distinctions among the various artists' projects. Birnbaum succeeds in sharpening the distinctions, even if the accompanying rhetoric is cramped and confining. "For Pascale Marthine Tayou," one reads, "the ceaseless movement between places and contexts, forms and media, has become a permanent condition," but the same might have been said of most of them as easily as of the Ghent-based Cameroonian Tayou.

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But ultimately, the rhetoric isn't a big problem. More so is that, subsumed into the artwork, the "ceaseless movement" of its context becomes an artifice, a fiction, even a mannerism, because as soon as the random matter of daily life is given a form, a name and a date, it takes on a kind of permanence or at least longevity, albeit one that costs more effort to maintain. In any case, it is easier to note that many artists today want their work to acknowledge impermanence, flux and multiplicity than it is to put words to the visual evidence of their distinct and characteristic ways of doing so. But what the rhetoric doesn't acknowledge is that this art is not so much about the "permanent conditions" within which today's artists find themselves working as about the sensitivity, spontaneity and idiosyncratic élan with which they react to them—about the artist's "genius," though the word is taboo. Just as much as with the neo-Expressionist painting of the '80s, though perhaps more intelligently, the assemblage sculpture of the present decade has been about the power of artistic subjectivity. If Rachel Harrison is in many ways the mid-career artist of the moment—and her appearance in "Fare Mondi" is merely one more reminder of that—it is because of her uncanny ability to put images and materials together in a way that not only always seems to have a hidden logic but also outstrips the viewer's ability to explain it. That viscerally experienced distance between the artist's awareness of the possibilities inherent in her material and one's own gives the work its sense of surprise but also marks its exemplary status. And the funky, offhand look Harrison cultivates is a permanent reminder that she didn't have to sweat over creating that oblique logic; when intuition and intelligence are one and the same, it all comes naturally.

Still, if the test of genius today comes in the encounter with the condition of multiplicity, what's apparent in Venice is that the attempt to counter multiplicity with more multiplicity is at best merely an inspired stopgap. The opposite strategy, facing multiplicity with singularity and blankness, flux with stillness, is just as valid. Among the best works in "Fare Mondi" are a group of large-scale paintings on paper, made in the early '70s by Tony Conrad, who is better known for his structuralist films and minimalist music (he was a member of Dream Syndicate with La Monte Young, John Cale and others). All titled *Yellow Movie*, their imagery of a white or yellow rectangle framed by a roughly painted black border in turn surrounded by yet another color suggests a blank movie screen in a dimly lit space. The artist's conceit was that, painted with inexpensive, unstable paint, the rectangles would gradually yellow, and this imperceptible change would make them the slowest motion pictures ever made. Conrad mixes media in the mind, not in the gallery space. But just as he renders the distinction between movement and stillness moot, so does his minimalism undo the distinction between multiplicity and singularity, since the simplest differences of color, proportion and touch are sufficient to give these works all the complexity they need to linger in the mind, not as generalizations but as concrete particulars.

This is not to say that Conrad's reaction to the condition of art is inherently superior to that of Harrison, or Tayou, or of many other good artists Birnbaum has included. It's only to say that it stands out by standing against the exhibition's presiding aesthetic; because art teaches us to value the anomalous, a dominant aesthetic always undermines itself. If there's one thing you can depend on, it's that assemblage will not be the main event at the next Venice Biennale, because it will be felt to be too familiar, too easy.

In a Biennale in which the national pavilions seemed extraordinarily flat, the best of them was the one that the Biennale itself rightly awarded its Golden Lion, the mini-retrospective of Bruce Nauman in the American pavilion (with two off-site supplements), curated by Carlos Basualdo and Michael Taylor of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. I say this with some regret as I believe that a survey of such a well-known artist is not necessarily the best use of a pavilion; I'd have been happier if a chance had been taken on a younger, unconsecrated figure such as Harrison. Or at least if the Nauman show had consisted entirely of recent work. For Venice, Nauman produced a new sound installation in two versions, Italian and English, *Giorni* and *Days*. Each is a space filled with a hubbub of words that soon turn out to be a variety of voices enunciating the names of the days of the week, but not in order. There is a logic to the sequences, but unlike the logic behind Harrison's works, it's not beyond one's grasp; it just takes a little time and concentration to catch on to it. That logic is of no particular interest in itself; it simply serves, I think, as a way to introduce a certain sense of irregularity into the texture of the words. A close contemporary of Conrad's—both artists are nearing 70—Nauman shares his intuition that stillness is always already in movement, minimalism already dense with detail. In *Days*, clamor and multiplicity resolve into clarity and simplicity and then fall back again: this, according to Nauman, is the structure of time. ■

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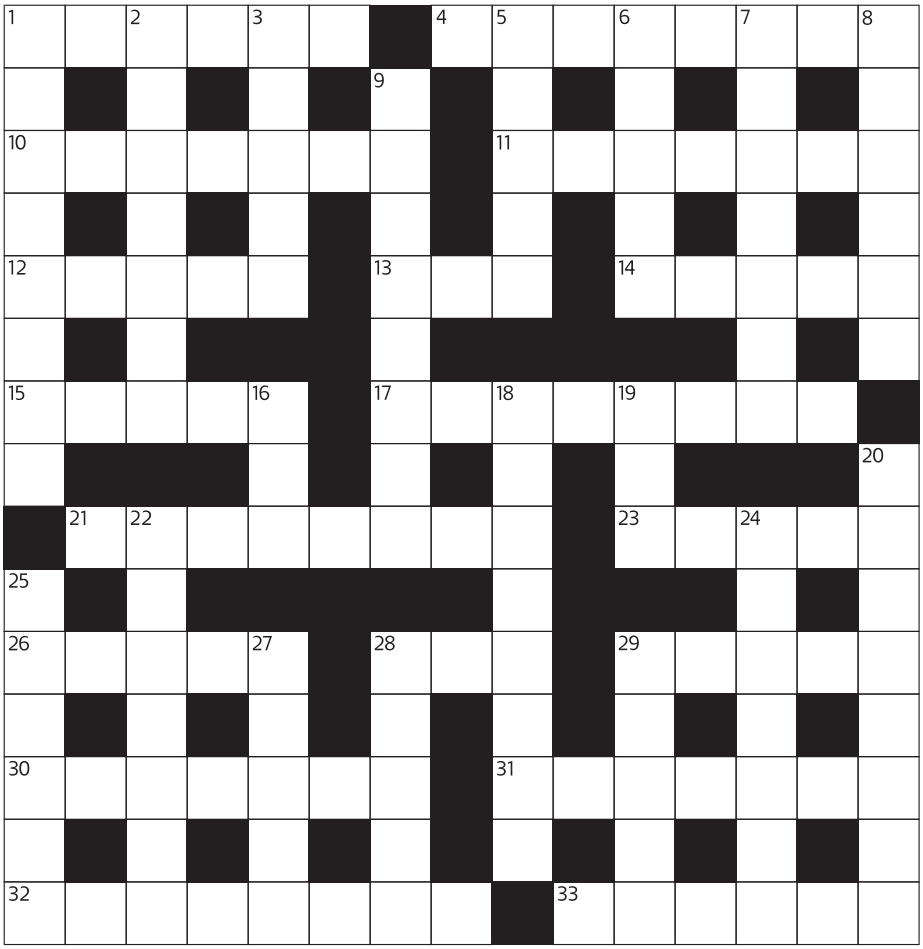

ACROSS

1 See 5 down

4 A sparkling wine sort of puts a person inside, to a point. (8)

10 The result of being not safe as you appear. (7)

11 A little work to a kind of turn that is given you temporarily? This is rich! (7)

12 Oh, it's just the sort that gives you a lift! (Being this with your petard puts you in big trouble!) (5)

13 How they came into the ark is just this, by this. (3)

14 Is the sort that deprives you of something… (5)

15 and **17** …and this sort of thing takes those who go on all fours—they're handy when you go fishing. (5,8)

21 Take a lash to your favorites—dogs! (8)

23 Kinda cute to take transportation in Chicago with a $5 bill, commonly. (5)

26 See 1 down

28 See 3 down

29 Possibly throw the answer in here, for whatever value! (5)

30 You'll find a sort of lettuce around here, and sticks, also. (7)

31 Confused re Mr. Poe? Butterfly or penguin? (7)

32 Soak in water, with an awful dread of the result, which is held back. (8)

33 See 3 down

DOWN

1, 26 across and **6** It's wrong for night to start where you find the end of the creek's water—you'd be really mad to display it! (8,2,3,5)

2 No night could make it, in complete absence. (7)

3, and **28** and **33** across Doggone it, the wind shows what you do with a lot of gabbing! (5,3,6)

5 and **1** across Bound to be close, so hop to a sort, in fish hash. (5,6)

6 See 1

7 Born, as they sometimes say, with a wild ride to what is really wanting! (7)

8 Surprisingly enough, there's a point to bad taste, and you might leave it to your followers. (6)

9 The arm of a sea creature seen in a tangled net with a sort of cleat. (7)

16 and **25** What Santa possibly did to get going—you can hear a clip-clop made by one. (3-6)

18 A swan and a deer, both wild, gave sound feedback. (8)

19 The old expression implies a trooper does it—to be in a horizonal state. (3)

20 Like the open shay they sang of, it doesn't show much power. (3-5)

22 Warm's warm, in the extreme! (Possibly describes a go-getter.) (3-4)

24 Pine for this, possibly. (3,4)

25 See 16

27 Oftentimes a trial is connected with it, but that's a mistake! (5)

28 The bad state of what you hope you have "good." (5)

29 It's one of the things that go back and forth right before your eyes, when you're driving. (5)

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I	■	N	■	A	■	N	■	N	■	M	■	U	■	E
A	S	P	I	R	I	N	■	T	A	B	A	R	D	S
N	■	E	■	E	■	A	■	I	■	O	■	N	■	I
O	N	E	■	D	I	R	E	C	T	■	I	S	I	S
■	■	L	■	E	■	B	■	E	■	S	■	U	■	T
B	A	S	S	V	I	O	L	■	D	E	L	P	H	I
A	■	■	■	I	■	R	■	E	■	M	■	■	■	N
B	U	C	K	L	E	■	A	S	P	I	R	I	N	G
Y	■	O	■	S	■	S	■	C	■	C	■	M	■	■
G	A	M	E	■	T	O	M	A	T	O	■	P	E	A
R	■	E	■	S	■	U	■	P	■	L	■	U	■	D
A	N	O	T	H	E	R	■	A	D	O	P	T	E	D
N	■	U	■	E	■	E	■	D	■	N	■	E	■	U
D	O	T	E	D	■	D	R	E	S	S	E	D	U	P

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I Woke Up Every Morning Looking Like I Lost a Fight

Deep, dark circles under my eyes made me look exhausted and old. I tried every trick and treatment to get them to fade but nothing worked. It seemed like I was stuck with my "morning shiners," until I found a solution...

—By Pete Humes

Every morning at the office I'd get the same question, "Rough night Kevin?" My co-workers took one look at the ugly, dark circles under my eyes and assumed I had a late night out with little or no sleep. Who could blame them? I looked exhausted. Little did they know that even when I got eight hours, I'd wake up looking like I'd gone 12 rounds. I've tried dozens of serums and creams. I even sat for hours watching the game with teabags under my eyes! Nothing worked and I still woke up every morning to find an exhausted face staring back at me in the mirror.

Then I found Hydrolyze[H]. Created by one of America's premier anti-aging skin care companies, Hydrolyze[H] helped me fade those embarassing dark circles in just a few weeks. It's an intensive eye cream that combines powerful ingredients for serious results. Brighter eyes gave my face a healthier, more natural glow and a renewed sense of confidence. Today when I look in the mirror, I can't believe the difference Hydrolyze[H] made!

Say Goodbye to the "Burn Out" Look

It doesn't matter if you call them "panda eyes," "raccoon eyes" or "morning shiners." Dark circles, puffiness and bags under the eyes can make you look burned out and years older than your actual age. We've all heard that a few wrinkles and a touch of gray can make a man look distinguished, but there's nothing distinguished about looking hung over and exhausted. And it takes more than a strong cup of coffee to wake up a pair of perpetually tired eyes.

Hydrolyze combines the most effective leading ingredient for reducing serious dark circles and bags, Haloxyl™†, with Matrixyl™ 3000‡, the most advanced anti-wrinkle ingredient known to science, proven to reduce visible wrinkles by up to 68%. You can see and feel a noticeable difference within weeks.

Hydrolyze® Under Eye Treatment® Combats Twice As Many Beauty Problems Than The Leading Eye Creams

BENEFITS	Hydrolyze	Hylexin™	StriVectin-SD®**
HELPS DIMINISH DARK CIRCLES	✓	✓	
REDUCES WRINKLES	✓		✓

What Causes Dark Circles?

Despite what most people think, deep, dark circles under your eyes are not primarily caused by being tired or stressed. Instead, dermatologists and plastic surgeons agree that dark circles are caused by capillaries that leak blood close to the skin's surface. When this blood begins to oxidize, it turns a bluish red color, similar to an ugly bruise. And since the skin under the eye is very thin, it's easy for embarassing bags and dark circles to show through. The more transparent your skin and the more blood that pools under it, the darker the circles appear. And what's worse, this discoloration over time can become permanent.

Ultimate Anti-Aging for Your Eyes

In scientific studies, Haloxyl™† has been shown to help reduce the leaked blood under the skin by using a series of natural enzymes that break down the blood and cause your dark circles to fade. In fact, Haloxyl™† is so effective because it actually helps strengthen the capillaries to help prevent them from leaking in the first place. In a double-blind clinical trial more than 72% of users who had serious dark circles and used Haloxyl™† saw an obvious visible reduction in the dark color under their eyes. These findings were confirmed using high-speed laboratory photography that clearly showed a significant reduction in the appearance of the blue and red color that make up dark circles.

Matrixyl™ 3000‡, one of the most effective wrinkle reducing compounds ever produced, is a clinically-proven compound that actually stimulates collagen production to help reduce the apearance of visible deep wrinkles and increases the firmness of your skin after only two months.

If You're Tired of Looking Tired...

You can take steps today that will help you end the embarassment and "fade the black." Hydrolyze not only reduces the appearance of dark circles and bags, but also helps prevent them. The result is a revitalized and more refreshed-looking you! All-natural Hydrolyze is designed to be safe and gentle enough for every day use.

How Hydrolyze® Under Eye Treatment® Reduces Dark Circles
BEFORE
DARK UNDER-EYE CIRCLE
BLOOD CELLS
LEAKING CAPILLARY
AFTER
LIGHTER UNDER-EYE SKIN
STRENGTHENED CAPILLARY
Before – Dark circles form under the eyes due to weakened capillaries that leak blood close to the skin's surface.
After – Hydrolyze's active ingredient, Haloxyl™, uses natural enzymes to help break down leaked blood under the skin and strengthen the capillaries to help prevent further blood leakage. Eyes appear brighter and younger.

*Hylexin™ is a registered trademark of Bremenn IP Holdings, LLC. – **Strivectin SD® is a registered trademark of Klein-Becker IP Holdings, LLC. – †Haloxyl™ and ‡Matrixyl™ 3000 are registered trademarks of Sederma, S.A.S. – Hydrolyze® Under Eye Treatment® is not endorsed by Klein-Becker IP Holdings, LLC., Bremenn IP Holdings, LLC. or Sederma, S.A.S.

Having A Hard Time Finding Hydrolyze[H] Under Eye Treatment®?

Until now Hydrolyze[H] has only been available through plastic surgeons' offices in New York and Beverly Hills. But now you can experience first hand the unique results of Hydrolyze[H] in combating both dark circles and wrinkles without a visit to a doctor.

The makers of Hydrolyze[H] are so confident in their anti-aging technology, they're offering a 30-Day Risk Free Trial...because seeing is believing! To get your 30-day supply of Hydrolyze[H] risk free, for just a small shipping & processing fee, call now. Our operators are ready to let you try one of the greatest breakthroughs in fighting dark circles and wrinkles.

Call 888-292-3387 to get your Hydrolyze[H] Under Eye Treatment® 30-Day Risk Free Trial Today!

Mention Promotion Code HZ100039

www.HydrolyzeDirect.com

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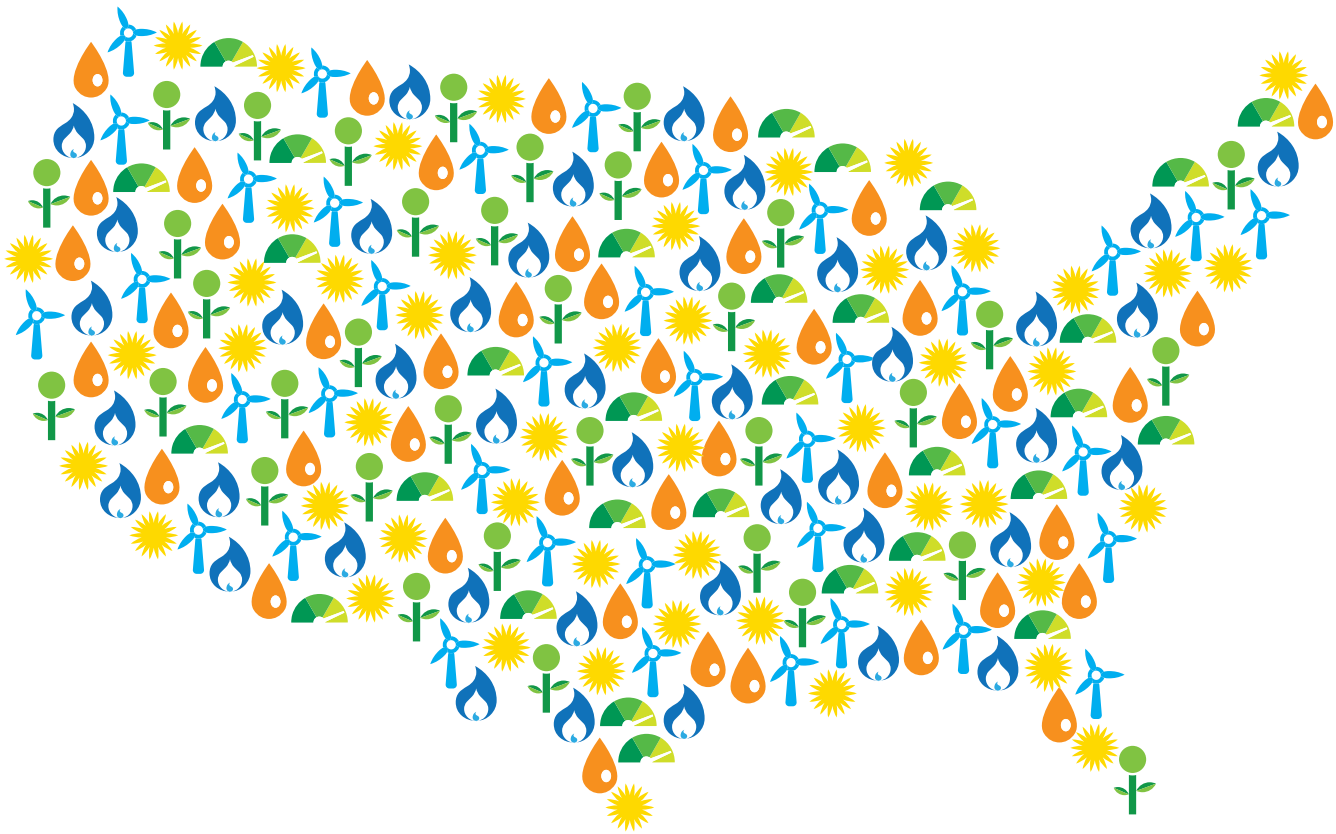
Making the most of America's untapped energy resources is key to improving energy security and the nation's economy. Learn more at bp.com/us.

New areas offshore may hold enough reserves to fuel auto consumption for about 30 years. Our groundbreaking platforms in the Gulf of Mexico add over 400,000 barrels a day to U.S. supplies.

Demand for natural gas is growing fast. Exploring offshore could help meet energy needs. Today, natural gas accounts for over 40% of BP's hydrocarbon portfolio in the U.S.



Energy security begins at home.

America's wind resources remain untapped. BP and its partners have wind projects in 4 states generating renewable energy for over 180,000 average U.S. homes.

Solar energy is heating up. We're partnering with the Department of Energy and Arizona State University to lower costs and improve solar performance.

Demand for renewable fuels is growing. BP has partnered with Verenium to accelerate the development of advanced biofuels for U.S. motorists.

Energy efficiency is a hidden resource. So we created the BP Energy Lab to help each of us reduce energy usage and carbon emissions. bp.com/energylab

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